

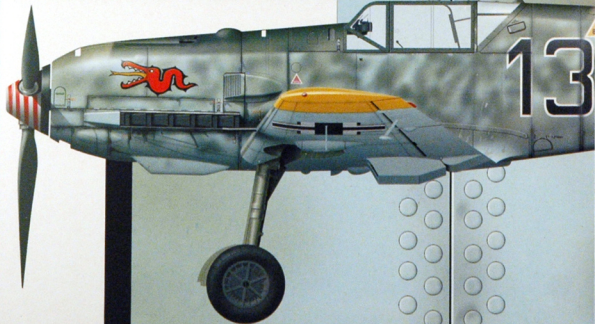
**LUFTWAFFE COLOURS**  
**Volume Two Section 2**



# JAGDWAFFE

**Eric Mombeek**  
With David Wadman  
& Martin Pegg

**BATTLE OF  
BRITAIN**  
**Phase Two**  
**August-September 1940**





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## BATTLE OF BRITAIN PHASE TWO

# 1940

*From Reichsmarschall Göring to all units of Luftflotten 2, 3 and 5.  
Operation Adler Within a short period you will wipe the British Air  
Force from the sky. Heil Hitler.*

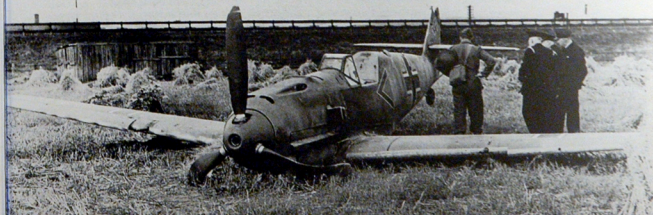
*Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring  
quoted from an Enigma message sent to Luftwaffe units,  
8 August 1940*

*Until further orders, operations are to be directed exclusively against the enemy Air Force, including the targets of the enemy aircraft industry allocated to the different Luftflotten. Shipping targets, and particularly large naval vessels, are only to be attacked where circumstances are especially favourable. For the moment, other targets should be ignored. We must concentrate our efforts on the destruction of the enemy Air Forces. Our night attacks are essentially dislocation raids, made so that the enemy defences and population shall be allowed no respite. Even these, however, should where possible be directed against Air Force targets.*

*Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, Karinhall Conference,  
15 August 1940:  
Paragraph 6 of an address to Luftflotte Senior Staff*

*It is doubtful if there is any point in continuing the attacks on radar sites, in view of the fact that not one of those attacked has so far been put out of operation.*

*Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, Karinhall Conference,  
15 August 1940:  
Paragraph 9 of an address to Luftflotte Senior Staff*





## Prelude to Adlertag

Up to 9 August, the Luftwaffe's Operations Staff had foreseen that *Adlerangriff* would be launched on 10 August, but a forecast of unsettled weather resulted in a postponement until the 13th. Meanwhile, as a result of the heavy losses suffered on 11 August, the Luftwaffe was beginning to appreciate that the British RDF stations were providing Fighter Command with advance warning of approaching raids. It was decided, therefore, that on the 12th all such known stations should be put out of action before *Adlertag*. The task was entrusted to *Hptm.* Walter Rubensdorffer's *Eprobungsgruppe* 210, a specialist unit within *Luftflotte* 2 then operationally evaluating *Bf* 109s and *Bf* 110 aircraft in the fighter-bomber role. In the course of this evaluation, *Erg.Gr.* 210 had since 13 July been operating against shipping, proving so effective that by 30 July, after little more than two weeks' active service, *Generalfeldmarschall* Kesselring congratulated the unit for having sunk 89,000 tons of merchant vessels plus four warships.

The Gruppe establishment comprised a *Gruppen Stab* and three *Staffeln*. The *Stab*, 1. and 2. *Staffeln* were equipped with the *Bf* 110, most fitted with bomb racks under their fuselages, while the 3. *Staffel*, commanded by *Obst.* Otto Hintze, who had earlier fought in the Polish and French campaigns, was equipped with the *Bf* 109. Although the *Bf* 109s of 3. *Staffel* were to fly with the *Bf* 110s as escort, each aircraft was fitted with a centreline rack suitable for mounting a single 500 kg bomb. At any sign of danger, however, the *Bf* 109s could jettison their bombs and revert to the ordinary fighter role.

On 12 August, as a prelude to *Adlertag*, the unit switched its attention to RAF bases and radar stations. The first operations of the day were co-ordinated attacks against Dunkirk (Canterbury), Pevensey, Dover and Rye. The attack on Dover radar station was carried out by the *Bf* 109s of 3. *Staffel* which claimed three 500 kg bomb hits in the target area, but only slightly damaged the station which continued to operate with emergency equipment. Further sorties were flown the same day when, together with *Do* 17s from *KG* 3, the unit attacked Manston aerodrome. Despite heavy AA fire, the attackers succeeded in putting the aerodrome out of action until the following day, but as *Erg.Gr.* 210 withdrew, it was attacked by the Spitfires of 54 Sqn and the Hurricanes of 501 Sqn. One of the pilots from 1. *Staffel* on this mission - making his fifth war flight - was *Lt.* Erich Beudel, flying one of the unit's *Bf* 110 C-6 aircraft which, instead of carrying a bomb rack, was armed with a 30 mm MK 101 cannon. In his diary, he later recorded:-

"Without any warning, numerous Spitfires and Hurricanes are on top of us. For the most part we beat them off, then a Spitfire sits over me, ready to dive, but I was already in the saving clouds. I skipped from cloud to cloud across the Channel. Suddenly there are a few Hurricanes under the *Bf* 110s. From the left, one Hurricane gets underneath and behind me. My W/T Operator shouts, 'Fighters!' and begins to lose a drum. I close the radiator shutters tight and squeeze the last ounce out of the engines to catch up with a Kette which is only 100 metres in front of me.

The oil temperature goes over 110 degrees. Suddenly my W/T Operator calls out, 'Tommy's down!' He had been followed by *Leutnant* Marx who got underneath him and gave him a burst. In the next second he was snuffed by the 109 and fell blazing into the sea. Far below, a parachute opened. At last the coast is reached. The starboard engine's coolant and oil temperatures have risen to 120 degrees. Streams of blue smoke come from the engine, which must seize at any moment. Smoke fills the cockpit. I make an oblique landing and as I touch down the engine stops suddenly. All the coolant had run out owing to a single shot in the radiator: three glancing shots in the propeller and starboard wing.

Because of his damaged aircraft, *Lt.* Beudel was unable to take part in the Gruppe's third attack of the day, an evening attack on Hawkinge aerodrome. Considerable damage was caused in this attack, and all aircraft returned safely.



LEFT: *Hptm.* Walter Rubensdorffer, the Kommandeur of *Eprobungsgruppe* 210, who lost his life on 15 August 1940.



ABOVE: Aircraft of 9/JG 54 - 'The Devil Staffel' - taxing at Guines before a mission, August 1940. Individual aircraft numbers are applied under the cockpit in yellow. Bomber escort missions carried out by JG 54 were generally noted for their efficiency.



RIGHT: In early August 1940, Guines was the base of III./JG 54 under *Hptm.* Fritz Closs. Here, 'White 5' of *Obst.* Günther Schöde's 7. *Staffel* taxis out to the runway, where two machines of 8. *Staffel* have already started their take-off run. Note the undersize fuelage bulkenkreuz on 'White 5'.

## A Major Flaw

Although German intelligence had accurately predicted the RAF order of battle, a major flaw in the planned *Adlerangriff* was the blind faith placed in *Oberst* Josef Schmid's fundamentally inaccurate 'Studie Blau'. Such was the reliance placed in this document that its accuracy was hardly questioned, even when subsequent information should have allowed it to be updated with more accurate information. One of the results of Schmid's erroneous study was that even as late as 13 August, when *Adlerangriff* was launched, neither *OKW* nor *ObdL* were fully conversant with the operational structure of Fighter Command, its airfield network, or the way in which the British RDF chain controlled the fighter defences. If the Luftwaffe was to eliminate Fighter Command then these matters needed to be clearly understood and targeted accordingly. In the event, the misconceptions which resulted from Schmid's study led, for example, to the naval airfields of Gosport, Dettling and Lee-on-Solent being erroneously targeted as front line fighter stations, while Supermarine's Spitfire factory at Woolston was identified as a bomber factory belonging to A.V. Roe & Company.

The result of these intelligence failures was that a major part of the Luftwaffe's effort throughout July and the first twelve days of August was wasted on targets which, even if they had been successfully destroyed, were not important to the operational capability of Fighter Command.



ABOVE: A bombed-up *Bf* 110 of *Erg.Gr.* 210 showing the unit's emblem - a gunsight over a silhouette of the British Isles - and the position of the bomb racks. On 12 August, *Erg.Gr.* 210 attacked radar stations as part of the preparations for *Adlertag*.

## 13 August - Adlertag



ABOVE: Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, (left) seen here with General der Flieger Hans Jeschonnek. When the Royal Air Force was not defeated as anticipated and appeared not to have been weakened, Göring called the senior staffs of Luftflotten 2 and 3 to conferences at Karinhall on 15 and 19 September to review the progress of the battle.

manoeuvres with his Bf 110 around Fink's Dornier, while at the same time making hand gestures from the cockpit. Attributing this unusual manoeuvring to over-enthusiasm or high spirits, the display was ignored and the seventy-plus Dorniers continued onwards. Exasperated, Huth returned to his airfield, but KG 2 carried on alone and bombed the naval base at Sheerness and the airfield at Eastchurch, during which attacks five Do 17s were shot down by fighters and another five damaged.

*We (fighter pilots) had had a very hard day. We spent the night together and drank just half a bottle of champagne, I remember. We were in a bad mood because we had lost friends. So we went to bed with the order to start very early next day, but none of us could sleep, myself included. So I got up, went to the library and picked up a book which I knew. I read, "Whoever weeps in the world this night, weeps for me", and it moved me very much.*

*Recollections of Paul Temme concerning the evening before his last flight.*



ABOVE AND LEFT: Paul Temme's Bf 109 E-4 attracts a crowd of interested onlookers while on display in the East London Borough of Hackney during the latter part of August 1940. The newspaper caption refers to the practice of reducing crashed enemy aircraft to scrap and melting down the remains in order to obtain new raw materials.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of Gruppenstab I./JG 2 flown by Obf. Paul Temme, Gruppenadjutant.

The Bf 109 E-4 flown by Obf. Paul Temme of JG 2 as it appeared when forced down beside Shoreham airfield early on the morning of 13 August, becoming the first Jagdwaffe casualty of Adlertag. Finished in a scheme of 02 and 71, the fuselage sides show signs of patchy repainting, possibly to cover earlier unit markings or the aircraft Stammkennzeichen, and the Adjutant Chevron was placed higher and further forward than usually seen on Bf 109s of the period. Almost invisible in some photographs, the JG 2 shield beneath the windscreen was partially hidden by the paint of the heavily applied mottle on the front of the aircraft. The tip of the spinner was painted red and the undersurface 65 wrapped around the leading edges of the main wings. Three Abschluss bars were painted on black, each being surmounted by a small, lighter coloured circle.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: On 13 August, several units failed to receive the order delaying Adlerangriff and took off on their pre-arranged missions. One such unit was JG 2 which mounted an early morning free Jagd sweep. Taking part in this operation, despite the fact the engine of his Bf 109 E-4 aircraft had not been running satisfactorily the day before, was the Gruppenadjutant of I./JG 2, Obf. Paul Temme. On the 15th, his engine was again lacking power, and Temme lagged behind the rest of his formation. When he went to the assistance of a struggling Ju 88, Temme was attacked by two or three Spitfires and crash-landed in a field on the southern edge of Shoreham airfield. Although reported to have had a red painted spinner, tonal contrast suggests only the tip was red.





**RIGHT:** Believed to have been taken during mid-August, this view shows a Schwarm of Bf 109 Es from 9./JG 2 in flight above the English Channel. Note the well-known Storchschmuck emblem on the nose of each aircraft and the contrast between the black of the wing Balkenkreuz and the comparatively lighter tones of the 02/71 camouflage.



Oberst Harry von Bülow's JG 2 at Beaumont-le-Roger was another unit which had not received word of the delay and a *freie Jagd* was undertaken by the *Staffeln* of I. Gruppe to cover a morning raid by elements of KG 54 against the airfields at Odham and Farnborough. During the course of this operation, the *Gruppenadjutant* of I./JG 2, Oblt. Paul Temme, became the first fighter loss of *Adlertag* when his Bf 109 was damaged by Spitfires and he was obliged to make a forced-landing near Shoreham airfield where he was subsequently taken prisoner. Meanwhile, the Ju 88s of KG 54, frustrated by poor weather and the unwelcome attentions of RAF fighters, had aborted the raid.

Some three hours later, similar confusion affected the Bf 110s of I./ZG 2 which had been ordered to escort other Ju 88s from KG 54 in a feint towards Portland. By this time, however, KG 54 had been made aware of the postponement, but ZG 2's 28 Bf 110s took off and set out for Portland. Approaching the British coast they found waiting for them not the Ju 88s of KG 54 they had been briefed to expect but RAF fighters. In the air battle which developed, ZG 2 was fortunate to escape with only the loss of one Bf 110 and two damaged.

As the day progressed, the weather eventually cleared and *Adlertag* started in earnest when the first major attack, consisting of three waves of bombers with fighter escort, was launched during the mid-afternoon. In the south-west, *Luftflotte 3* Bf 110s of V./LG 1 and the Bf 109s of Oberst Max Ibel's JG 27 were briefed to escort a formation of Ju 88s from LG 1 and Ju 87s from VIII. *Fliegerkorps*. In order to protect the bomber formations from the attentions of any defending fighters, a fighter sweep was carried out ahead of the force by Major Günther Freiherr von Maltzahn's II./JG 53. Sweeping in over the coast ahead of the bomber formations they were met by Spitfires of 152 Sqn and although some scattered fighting developed, JG 53, already low on fuel, was able to withdraw without loss.

On the eastern flank, the *Luftflotte 2* force of Ju 87s from II./St.G.1 and IV./LG 1, escorted by the Bf 109s of Major Gotthard Handrick's JG 26, were heading towards their targets; the airfields of Detling and Rochester. Following a well-executed sweep by JG 26 which drew the defending fighters of 65 Sqn away, *Hauptmann* Berndt von Brauchitsch's IV./LG 1 carried out a successful attack against Detling which caused considerable damage. Despite high expectations to the contrary, other Ju 87 units did not do well. II./St.G.1 ran into navigational difficulties, was unable to locate its target at Rochester airfield and jettisoned its bombs when attacked by the Hurricanes of 56 Sqn. II./St.G.2 attacked the RAF fighter station at Middle Wallop but was intercepted and lost six of its aircraft.

By early evening the daylight attacks were over. Although the airfields of Andover, Detling, Eastchurch and Middle Wallop had been bombed, none except Middle Wallop were fighter airfields and the damage inflicted was not significant to Fighter Command. More serious was the loss of 13 RAF aircraft. In comparison, the *Luftwaffe* lost nine Bf 109s destroyed or seriously damaged in combat out of a total of 44 aircraft destroyed and a further 36 seriously damaged.



**ABOVE:** A pre-war photograph showing Paul Temme in the Summer of 1939.

On 14 August, *Luftflotten* 2 and 3 again attacked airfields and communications targets in the south-east of England. Albeit on a lesser scale than those of the previous day, the attacks were again in the form of two thrusts. The first, from *Luftflotte 2*, began at about noon when some 80 Ju 87s, escorted by all three *Gruppen* of JG 26, headed towards targets at Dover, Folkestone and Hawkinge. Met by no fewer than four squadrons of RAF fighters, an immense dogfight involving some 200 aircraft developed above Dover. While *Hptm.* Kurt Fischer's I. Gruppe stayed to protect the dive-bombers, the Bf 109s of II. and III./JG 26, commanded respectively by *Hptm.* Karl Ebbighausen and Major Adolf Galland, fought it out with the defenders. During the clash between these units, Ju 87s sank a lightship and some Bf 109s shot down a number of barrage balloons, neither of these activities contributing to the objective of defeating Fighter Command.

The second thrust of the day was mounted by *Luftflotte 3* later in the afternoon. This involved no fewer than nine small raids along a front of some 100 miles of the English South Coast. By dispersing the RAF's fighters in this way, some of the attackers penetrated inland to bomb Middle Wallop and Colerne airfields and Southampton. By the end of the day's fighting *Jagdflotte* combat losses amounted to six Bf 109 E fighters with five pilots killed and one taken prisoner. Although the damage caused to RAF airfields was not significant, what was particularly worrying to Fighter Command was that three of its pilots had been killed.

Meanwhile, at 11.30 hrs, seven Bf 110s from the fighter-bomber unit *Erp.Gr.* 210 took off from Denain to carry out two separate attacks on the airfields at Ramsgate and Manston. After refuelling at St. Omer, the Bf 110s took off again, accompanied by an escort of 7 Bf 109s. At Ramsgate, the balloon barrage prevented the attack, so all aircraft continued to Manston. Slipping through the British defences, the Bf 110s carried out dive attacks to deliver their 250 kg bombs and succeeded in destroying three *Blenheims* of 600 Sqn and two hangars, as well as causing other damage and leaving a large crater in the middle of the airfield. The Gruppe lost two Bf 110s in this attack, one being flown by *Uffz.* Hans Steding with *Gefr.* Ewald Schank in the rear cockpit. Just after dropping its bombs, this crew's aircraft sustained a direct hit from one of the airfield's Royal Artillery *Bofors* anti-aircraft guns which blew off the aircraft's tail. With engines screaming, the remains of the machine cartwheelled across the aerodrome and smashed inverted into the ground, killing the pilot. With remarkable good fortune, however, Schank survived the disintegration of his aircraft and incredulous observers saw that



**LEFT:** A balloon shot down by Bf 109 Es. While providing easy targets, such action was rarely necessary and Göring eventually called for it to be restricted unless vital to the success of an operation. The pilot of 3./Erp.Gr. 210 in particular were said to have rather fancied themselves as Balloon Poppers after being in action against the balloon barrage at Dover.



**RIGHT:** Early Bf 109s of I./JG 26 showing the Staffel's grasshopper emblem used until early September 1940 when the Staffelflugkaptein, Oblt. Franz Hörrig, was replaced. Note also the early position of the Hakenkreuz.



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he had been thrown clear of his doomed machine at extremely low altitude. Although he passed out immediately after pulling his ripcord, Schank's parachute opened a mere fraction of a second before he landed, dazed and wounded, on one of the runways. Surrounded by his own unit's bomb bursts and the wreckage of his machine, he started to look for his pilot before being dragged to safety and only fully regained consciousness in Manston's sick ward.

On the evening of the 14th, a forecast of more unfavourable weather suggested that no large scale attack should be launched the following day. Under these circumstances, Göring ordered all his senior commanders to attend a conference at his Karinhall estate where there was to be a detailed inquest into the results of *Adlertag*. Nevertheless, sortie details for the next day were issued by *Luftflotte* 2, 3 and 5, primary targets again being Fighter Command airfields which were to be attacked in a series of synchronised raids. However, with the possible exception of *Luftflotte* 5, there appeared little likelihood of these orders being put into effect because of the predicted weather.



**ABOVE, LEFT, ABOVE AND TOP:** Hptm. Wolf-Heinrich Freiherr von Horowald served pre-war with Jagdgeschwader 'Richthofen' in 1935 and flew with the Condor Legion in 1936. He is seen here at his wedding on 9 May 1940, at which time he was Kommandeur of III./JG 52. Following the wedding ceremony, the guests were between courses at the reception when von Horowald was recalled to his unit for the invasion of France, due to start the following day! After the armistice with France, von Horowald was finally able to spend a short time with his wife, only to rejoin his unit on the Channel for the offensive against Britain. He was killed on 24 July, the first Kommandeur of a Jagdgruppe to lose his life in the Battle of Britain. In official circles, his death was seen as a great loss and, at his funeral, he was accorded major honours.



**LEFT:** A Feldwebel pilot and ground crew from 5./Erp. Gr. 210 posing with an SC 250 bomb at Densin, near Valenciennes, August 1940. The bomb bears the personal inscription 'Greetings from Arno'.

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**RIGHT:** A view showing how well camouflaged were aircraft operating from forward bases in France. In this case, the airfield is a cornfield used by 3./Erp. Gr. 210.



**BELOW:** Similarly camouflaged, a BF 109 E of the specialist fighter-bomber Staffel 3./Erp. Gr. 210. Previously identified as Oblt. Otto Hintze's 'Yellow 1', the original print of this photograph was marked to indicate that it was 'Yellow 3' flown by August Wing. Born in 1910 and therefore older than the average BF 109 pilot, Wing was a very experienced glider pilot who later went on to serve with the experimental units EKdo 25 and EKdo 262.





**ABOVE:** The pilot of 'Black 3' Erwin Leykauf. He is shown here as an NCO officer candidate but was later commissioned and became Staffkapitän of 8/JG 54. Leykauf remained with JG 54 throughout his wartime flying career and survived the war.



**ABOVE:** Bf 109 Es of 8/JG 54 lined up in readiness at one of the landing strips around the Forêt de Guines, early September. The aircraft closest to the camera with two Abschuß bars on its rudder is believed to be 'Black 1'. Behind this aircraft is Otto Erwin Leykauf's 'Black 3' showing five victory bars on the rudder; the fifth being a Spitfire shot down on 2 September.



**RIGHT:** A later photograph of Leykauf's 'Black 3' at Guines, still with five victory bars but now with the addition of an armoured windscreen, lightly mottled fuselage sides and, unusually, a band around its rear fuselage. The addition of mottling to the fuselage sides is typical for the period, but the significance of the fuselage band is not known.

**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 8./JG 54 flown by Ofw.-Offizier Anwärter Erwin Leykauf.**

'Black 3' of 8./JG 54 was flown by Ofw.-Offizier Anwärter Erwin Leykauf and displays five Abschuß bars on its rudder. The aircraft is finished in a very high demarcation 02/71 over 65 scheme and has a yellow painted cowl, on the forward portion of which is the Staffel emblem of a stylised red sparrow on a patch of pale blue. The spinner is white with a black-green backplate. As shown in accompanying photographs, this machine later received a light mottle to the fuselage sides and a fuselage band aft of the cross.



**RIGHT:** In the third week of August, some of Luftflotte 3's fighter units were transferred to strengthen Generalleutnant Albert Kesselring's Luftflotte 2. Here, Kesselring (second from left) meets with other senior Luftwaffe officers on the Channel coast. From the left, General der Flieger Hans Jeschonnek, Luftwaffe Chief of Staff, Kesselring, Generalleutnant Wilhelm Spiedde, Kesselring's Chief of Staff, General der Flieger Bruno Lorzer, Commander of II. Fliegerkorps.



**ABOVE:** Refueling 'White 2' of 9/JG 2. In this photograph the aircraft still has the Blue 65 fuselage sides.



**LEFT:** With the aircraft jacked up into the horizontal position, weapons personnel prepare to harmonise the MG 17 machine guns of 9/JG 2's 'White 2'. Note that in this later photograph the fuselage sides have now been mottled.





7./JG 2 Staffel Emblem.

**BELOW:** Fast cars or motorcycles prove an irresistible fascination to most fighter pilots. Here, Major Ulrich Mix, second left, and other officers of III./JG 2 try out a motorcycle and sidecar combination at Evreux West, August/September 1940. Note the emblem of 7./JG 2 on the sidecar, presumably applied to discourage the combination being "requisitioned" by another Staffel.



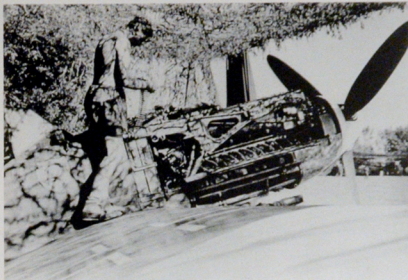
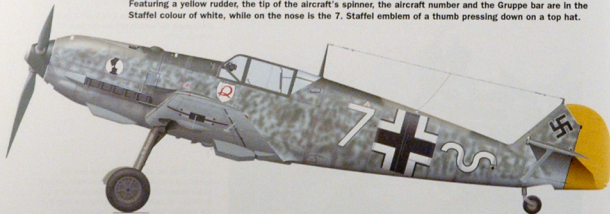
**ABOVE:** Ofc Kurt Goltzsche of 7./JG 2 and a member of the ground crew playing with a puppy named - appropriately - 'Tommy'. Behind them is Goltzsche's 'White 8' with the wavy bar III. Gruppe symbol. The 7. Staffel emblem of a thumb pressing on a top hat is clearly visible against the yellow painted cowling.

**BELOW:** 'White 7' of 7./JG 2, as shown in the accompanying profile, parked for concealment between trees on the airfield perimeter at Beaumont-le-Roger. The canopy has been left open to keep the cockpit interior comfortable in the mid-August sun.



#### Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 or E-4 of 7./JG 2, Beaumont-le-Roger, mid-August 1940.

Bf 109 E-3 or E-4 'White 7' of 7./JG 2 seen at Beaumont-le-Roger during mid-August and finished in the heavily stippled finish common to aircraft of JG 2. With an upper surface pattern of 02 and 71, further quantities of what is believed to be 71 have been applied to the fuselage sides to tone down the 65 blue fuselage sides. Featuring a yellow rudder, the tip of the aircraft's spinner, the aircraft number and the Gruppe bar are in the Staffel colour of white, while on the nose is the 7. Staffel emblem of a thumb pressing down on a top hat.



**LEFT:** A mechanic reloading the ammunition tanks on one of JG 2's Bf 109 E-4s, mid-August 1940. Each ammunition tank held 1000 rounds for each of the two 7.9 mm MG 17 machine guns mounted on the engine crankcase. Also visible in the wing leading edge is one of the two 20 mm MG/FF cannon carried by the Bf 109 E-3 and E-4, each with 60 rounds per gun.

**RIGHT:** The American cartoon character 'Adamsen' was used originally by 4./JG 26 but later became the emblem of 8./JG 26 when the Staffel was redesignated. It is seen here on 'Red 5' of 8./JG 26, France, 1940.



**LEFT:** 'Red 4' was another Bf 109 E-1 which barely made the coast of France. This aircraft is believed to have belonged to 3./Jagdgruppe 210 based at Calais-Marek and its white wingtips are visible below the waves. Although the camouflage scheme is probably still unfinished, the heavy style of mottle extending over the nose surfaces is unusual and unlike that normally seen on this unit's aircraft. The displaced panel ahead of the canopy and the open panels in the wings indicate that, despite the rising tide, the guns have been made safe.





THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE TOP: Various views of Ofw. Hans Illner and the very personalised markings applied to his 'White 2'. Later in the battle, on 5 November, Illner was flying over England in another aircraft, 'White 6' with a red outline, when he noticed a Spitfire coming up from behind. As an evasion measure, he put his aircraft into a high-speed dive but lost his starboard wing while pulling out. Illner baled out and was captured.



II./JG 51 emblem



**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 flown by Ofw. Hans Illner, 4./JG 51.** This profile of Ofw. Hans Illner's 'White 2' of 4./JG 51 has been compiled from various photographs and written sources relating to how this machine may have appeared in mid-August. Finished in what is believed to be 02/71 the fuselage sides carry a heavily applied mottle in the same two colours. The '2' is white with a red outline and three Abschuss bars are painted on the fin in white. Beneath the canopy rim the name 'Gretel' was applied above a small clover leaf, both of which were believed to be yellow, possibly with a red outline. Ahead of the name 'Gretel' were two small dice and beneath the nose, but not visible in this profile, was a lip and cigarette motif applied after Illner's first kill on 5 July. The lips are red with a black outline, the cigarette is white with grey and black smoke and instead of a brand name on the cigarette there appears the date of Illner's first victory, marked as 5.VII.40.



ABOVE: Fuselage markings on another Bf 109 E, 'White 1', of II./JG 51. As on Illner's 'White 2', the fuselage number has been outlined in red, but note the slight variations between the badge shown here and the colour profile above, particularly in the detail of the bird's feet and wings.

## August-September 1940



LEFT: Mechanics at work on the DB 601 engine of a BE 109 E-1 from JG 53 (note PkA emblem on cowling in background) in the Summer of 1940. The colour of the spinner tip usually signified the aircraft's Staffel, in this case yellow identifying 3., 6., or 9. Staffel.



ABOVE: Adlertag. Uffz. Max Endress of 9./JG 51 with his BE 109 E-7 at Cap Gris-Nez, 17 to his on 13 August 1940, shortly before taking off for a mission over England.



RIGHT: Uffz. Max Endress, photographed again on Adlertag. During his sortie over England, Endress was wounded in the foot and his aircraft damaged. Returning to make an emergency landing in France, his aircraft sustained 80% damage and was written off. Here, medical personnel attend to Endress's wound. He survived the Battle of Britain and later flew with the 'Fismeer' Geschwader, JG 5, in Norway.

## Adolf Galland



LEFT: The General der Jagdflieger makes a visit to a fighter unit in the West.

## Early Career

Adolf Galland was born on 19 March 1912 at Westerholt near Essen in Westphalia, where his father, continuing in the tradition of earlier generations of the Galland family, managed the country estate owned by Count Graf von Westerholt. The young Adolf Galland spent his early school days in Westerholt, and his later academic studies were completed at the Hindenburg Gymnasium in Bitt. Adolf Galland was 14 when, in early 1927, a group of sailplane enthusiasts brought their gliders to a corner of the Westerholt estate and first sparked in him an overwhelming enthusiasm to fly. By the time Galland was 17 years of age, he was a glider pilot in the *DLV* (*Deutscher Luftsportverband* - German Air Sport Association) and, in February 1932, he entered the *Deutsche Fliegerschule* (German Flying School) at Braunschweig. Between July and September, 1933 Galland attended a secret flying course in Italy and subsequently became a pilot with *Deutsche Luft Hansa* - the German airline - flying Ju G-24 and Rohrbach Roland aircraft, mainly on the Stuttgart/Geneva/Marseilles/Barcelona routes.

When Adolf Hitler came to power and created a new air force, volunteers with flying experience were urgently sought and Galland joined the new clandestine air force. After basic training at Schleissheim, he qualified as a fighter pilot and, on 1 January 1935, the newly commissioned *Leutnant* Galland was posted to JG 132 'Richtbofen', then equipped with Ar 65 aircraft, though later to receive the He 51. After two flying accidents, Galland faced the unwelcome prospect of being forced to leave the *Luftwaffe*. However, by devious means, he managed to convince the medical authorities that he was indeed fit for flying duties - though, in fact, he suffered a minor sight deficiency in his left eye - and succeeded in retaining his position in the *Luftwaffe*.

When the Spanish Civil War broke out in 1936, Galland volunteered to join the *Legión Condor*. He arrived in Spain on 8 May 1937, at which time he was nearly 25, but he had to wait two months before he could fly with his assigned unit, the 1./J 88. From the Summer of 1937 he led the 3./J 88, a *Staffel* equipped with obsolescent He 51 biplane fighters which, as they were no match against the superior Soviet Polikarpov I-16 monoplanes, were employed in the ground-attack role, principally strafing enemy ground forces.

After a year in Spain - twice the amount of time spent by any other pilot - and after flying 280 missions, Galland returned to Germany in August, 1938. He was then an experienced formation leader and, in view of the role his unit had played in Spain, he was instructed to prepare numerous reports for the



BELOW: Taken at Calders in mid-August, this picture shows officers of III./JG 26, including a shirtless Hptm, Adolf Galland (centre), watching the Gruppe's aircraft return from a sortie.



*Reichsluftministerium* to ensure that his expertise in the ground-attack role was passed on to future *Schlachtflyer*. Such a desk-bound position, however, was not all to Galland's liking and in November, 1938, he was able to leave the *RLM*, only to find himself posted back to the ground-attack force in the Summer of 1939 when, just before the invasion of Poland, he was ordered to lead the 4. *Staffel* of II. (*Schlacht*)/LG 2, a ground-attack unit based at Tutow and equipped with Hs 125s.

On 1 October, 1939, after the Polish campaign - which proved the importance of effective ground-support operations - Galland was awarded the Iron Cross, Second Class, and promoted to the rank of *Hauptmann*. In April 1940, he succeeded in being transferred back to fighters and was assigned to the *Staffel* JG 27 as Operations Officer. As the inactivity of the so-called Polish War dragged on over several months, Galland was meanwhile able to arrange a temporary transfer to *Staffel* III./JG 53 in order to join his comrade Werner Mölders, whom he had met in Spain, Galland returning to JG 27 only a few days before the opening of the *Westfeldzug*, the campaign in the West.

During the invasion of France and Belgium, Galland shot down two RAF Hurricanes from 87 Sqn. Unfortunately, in his autobiography, Galland incorrectly referred to these aircraft, which fell south of Liege, as Belgian Hurricanes, inadvertently creating a myth which some authors insist on perpetuating to the present day. In fact, all Belgian Hurricanes had already been destroyed in the first two days of the invasion.

Galland subsequently went on to claim many other victories during the campaign in the West. A Spitfire fell to his guns south of Sedan on 16 May; two French Potez 63-11s on 19 May; another Potez south of Amiens on 20 May; two Bristol Blenheims over Dunkirk on 29 May and a Spitfire over Dunkirk on 2 June. On 3 June - the day of the infamous Operation Paula, when 500 bombers and dive-bombers attacked *Armée de l'air* airfields and French aircraft factories in and around Paris - he claimed a further two French aircraft shot down. On 20 May, Galland was awarded the Iron Cross, First Class, and at the same time left *Staffel* JG 27 to become *Kommandeur* of III./JG 26. His last two victories in the Western campaign, a Blenheim and a Defiant south of Evreux, were claimed on 14 June.

After the fall of France, III./JG 26 returned to its home base at Münchgladbach in Germany in order to rest its personnel and overhaul and service its equipment. On 18 July, Galland was promoted to the rank of *Major* and, two days later, III./JG 26 was ordered to move back to France where it was to be based on the coast at Caillères, some 11 kilometers south-east of Wissant in the *Pas de Calais* in preparation for the assault against Great Britain.

The III./JG 26 flew its first sorties of the Battle of Britain on 24 July when Galland's 40 Bf 109s escorted 18 Do 17s briefed to attack a convoy. During this mission, Galland shot down a Spitfire of 54 Squadron flown by P/O John Allen, a successful pilot credited with 8 victories. The following



**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 flown by Major Adolf Galland, Gruppenkommandeur of III./JG 26, August 1940**

The Bf 109 E-3 flown by Major Adolf Galland, Gruppenkommandeur of III./JG 26 at Marquise, mid-August. Instead of the more usual 70/71 or 71/02 splinter scheme of the period, this particular Bf 109 was reported to have worn a mottled upper camouflage of locally manufactured pale and medium greys. On the rudder, the twenty-two *Abschuss* bars, each surmounted by a small circle, are reported to have been black rather than in the usual III. Gruppe practice of marking them in red. Interestingly, a pilot from JG 26 captured during the Battle stated during interrogation that Galland had for a while used a brown and green camouflage on his aircraft. This had been regarded with considerable anxiety by other pilots of the Gruppe who felt it made Galland's aircraft look exactly like a Hurricane, and they feared that one day he would be shot down in error by another Bf 109. A similar incident had already occurred earlier when Galland, flying an aircraft finished in what he described as a 'new grey-green camouflage paint', was almost accidentally shot down by Wilhelm Bathaas. It is not known whether Galland's description refers to the 02/71 scheme or a grey mottled camouflage as shown in this profile.



**RIGHT AND BELOW:** The Bf 109 E flown by Adolf Galland, Gruppenkommandeur of III./JG 26 at Marquise. The 22 *Abschuss* markings on the rudder indicate the photographs were taken after 15 August. Although it was customary for the III. Gruppe to apply these victory markings in red, Galland's were black. It is believed the camouflage was a locally mixed and applied grey mottle, rather than the more usual 70/71 or 02/71 splinter scheme of the period. On 22 August Galland was promoted to succeed Major Gotthard Handrick as Geschwaderkommodore. At the same time, Galland's place was taken by Gotthard Schöperle, who was promoted to take command of the III. Gruppe.



day, Galland shot down another Spitfire over Dover and a third on the 28th, bringing his score to 17. For these victories, Galland was awarded the coveted *Ritterkreuz* on 1 August, at that time only the fourth fighter pilot to be so decorated.

During a Stuka escort mission on 14 August, Galland claimed a Hurricane shot down and three Spitfires the following day. On the 17th, the young *Gruppenkommandeur*, together with Werner Mölders, the *Kommodore* of JG 51, was summoned by Göring to Karinhall. There, Galland learned that the *Reichsmarschall* had decided to replace the older *Geschwaderkommodoren*, many of whom, like Osterkamp and von Bülow-Borkamp had flown in the First World War, with younger fighter pilots. Consequently, at the age of only 28, Galland was appointed *Kommodore* of JG 26.

### Eichenlaubträger

Despite his new responsibilities, Galland continued to fly and claim further victories, a Spitfire on 25 August, a Defiant on the 27th and three Spitfires on the 31st. In the first twenty days of September, Major Galland claimed 12 kills against RAF Hurricanes and Spitfires. A Hurricane shot down on 24 September and believed to have been flown by P/O Harold Bird-Wilson of 17 Sqn, brought Galland's total claims to 40 *Luftsiegen*. With this number of victories and less than two months after he had been awarded the *RK*, Galland was called to the *Führer's* Headquarters where, as only the third member of the *Wehrmacht* to receive this decoration, he was presented with the Oak Leaves.

Returning to JG 26, Galland claimed his 45th victory on 15 October while flying escort to his former unit of the Polish campaign, II. (*Schlacht*)/LG 2, since equipped with Bf 109Gs and then flying *Jabo* sorties to bomb London. Promoted to *Oberfeldwebel* on 1 November, Galland claimed his 57th victory on 5 December. At that time he was the highest scoring *Luftwaffe* pilot, but this was also his last victory of the year since deteriorating weather conditions during the winter of 1940-41 temporarily curtailed further fighter operations.





ABOVE: Galland prepares for another sortie. Visible is the Mucky Mouse emblem below the cockpit and - rank having its privileges - the special telescope which Galland mounted in the windscreen.



LEFT: Photographed on 23 December 1940, Obersturmführer Galland taxis his Bf 109 E-4/N on the gravel strip at Abbeville.

BELOW: A closer view of the telescope mounted in Galland's aircraft. This instrument was used only to identify aircraft at long range. For gunnery, Galland used the standard Revi.



ABOVE: Major Galland's Bf 109 E-4/N, W.Nr. 5819, possibly photographed at Le Touquet in 1941. The fresh paint beneath the forward Stab symbols is believed to indicate the recent installation of nitrous oxide equipment to increase engine power.

BELOW: The 40th Abschnur har is added to the rudder of Galland's machine. For this achievement he was summoned to Hitler's Headquarters, where the Führer personally presented him with the Oak Leaves to the Knight's Cross.



LEFT AND BELOW: Meticulous record keeping on the rudder of Galland's aircraft as his victory score continues to increase.





ABOVE: Friends and rivals. Adolf Galland (right), Kommodore of JG 26, and Werner Mölders, Kommodore of JG 51, seen here in mid-September 1940, were the two leading personalities of the Jagdflotte during the Battle of Britain. Soon after this photograph was taken, Mölders was awarded the Eichenlaub on 21 September. Galland receiving this award three days later.

In early 1941, the airwar changed when German plans to invade Great Britain were abandoned and the *Wehrmacht* turned its attention first to the Balkans and later to Russia. In the West, only a small number of fighters remained, mainly operating in a defensive role against RAF intruder missions. In March, JG 26 was dispersed over various French airfields in Brittany, mainly in defence of Brest harbour. Galland claimed his first victory of 1942 on 4 April when he shot down a Spitfire of 91 Sqn, believed to have been flown by Sgt Jack Mann, a pilot credited with five confirmed victories plus three unconfirmed. On 15 April, while flying with his *Kutschmark* to visit Jafa 2 (Gen. Osterkamp), the pair made a short detour en route and over the English coast Galland succeeded in downing two, possibly three, Spitfires. JG 26

was then transferred to airfields in Belgium and Northern France and on 21 June, Galland claimed two Bf 109s and one Spitfire, but on the same day was shot down twice. On the first occasion he safely force-landed his damaged aircraft, but when shot down the second time he was wounded and had to bail out of his blazing machine.

With 70 victories, Galland was once more called to Hitler's HQ where he received the Oak Leaves with Swords, the first recipient of only 159 ever awarded. However, this high honour brought with it an order from Hitler forbidding Galland to continue flying but, with his usual resourcefulness, he was able to circumvent this restriction. By interpreting Hitler's order to mean *operational* flying and, on the pretext that he was only testing his unit's new Bf 109 F-3 and F-4 aircraft, Galland continued to fly and in this way justified his increasing score.

### General der Jagdflieger

With 97 victories, Galland learned of the death of his comrade *Oberst* Werner Mölders, killed when the He 111 in which he was a passenger crashed on 22 November 1941. On 5 December 1942, with the rank of *Generalleutnant*, Galland attended a farewell ceremony at Audembert in Northern France, where he left JG 26 and became Mölders's successor as *General der Jagdflieger*. He was then 30 years of age and the youngest General in the *Wehrmacht*. On 28 January 1942, he became only the second recipient of the Diamonds to the Knight's Cross. Early in his new position, Galland was responsible for some of the *Luftwaffe*'s most daring and successful operations. He planned the air cover for the battle-cruisers *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau* and the heavy cruiser *Prinz Eugen* during the so-called Channel Dash when, in February 1942, all three ships sailed up the English Channel to ports in Germany. Later, he was responsible for the reinforcement of the German fighter arm in Russia and the transfer of fighters to the Mediterranean theatre for operations against Malta. However, with the growing strength of Allied air power and under the most severe pressure and unrealistic demands, Galland became increasingly isolated from his superiors who issued orders which bore little resemblance to reality. During the Allied invasion of Sicily, where JG 53 and JG 77 bore the brunt of the fighting, Göring became especially angry, demanding aerial victories from German fighter pilots totally overwhelmed by Allied air power and accusing them of cowardice when, despite their best efforts, this proved impossible.

### Dismissal

In 1944, as the situation worsened, Galland clashed increasingly with Göring who blamed him personally for the failures of the *Jagdflieger*. Eventually, with the whole of the Fighter Corps disgraced and Galland was dismissed from his post, Göring tried to have him arrested and he was saved due only to Hitler's personal intervention. Thereafter, Galland again flew fighters, organising his own jet unit, JV 44. Despite the difficulties of introducing the radically new Me 262 to service in a rapidly deteriorating situation in which the inevitable final collapse of the Third Reich grew ever closer, Galland was able to score further victories. He flew his last sortie on 26 April 1945, when after scoring his last two victories - his 103rd and 104th - he was wounded and had to make an emergency landing on München-Riem airfield. In hospital when the war ended, Galland was made a POW.

Taken to Great Britain for detailed interrogation by British and US intelligence officers, Galland was eventually released in May 1947. The following year he left Europe for Argentina where he helped raise a modern air force for President Peron. Returning to Germany after seven years in South America, Galland later set up his own company - an aviation consultancy - which he headed until advancing years and failing health forced him into retirement.

During his lifetime, *Generalleutnant* a.D. Adolf Galland, holder of the Knight's Cross with Oak Leaves, Swords and Diamonds, succeeded in gaining the respect not only of his comrades, but also of his former enemies. He died on 9 February 1996, little more than a month before his 84th birthday, and was buried at the church of St. Laurentius in Bonn-Oberwinter.

## 15 August - 'Black Thursday'

A first light on 15 August, it seemed that the weather would indeed remain as forecast and that any large-scale daylight operations would not be possible. Even by 10.00 hrs., RAF plotting tables were clear, the only activity reported being a few reconnaissance flights. But the crews of these aircraft reported that the cloud was beginning to clear in the north and west over Britain, and this was accompanied by a rapid improvement in visibility over France. The missions planned for the three *Luftflotten* were therefore set in motion and shortly before noon, the first major attack took place when 40-plus Ju 87s, protected by a strong fighter escort, attacked the airfields of Hawkinge and Lympne. Considerable damage was caused and pilots from II./JG 51 and II. and III./JG 26 claimed kills against the Spitfires and Hurricanes which rose to intercept. While these attacks were in progress, the airfield at Manston was strafed by Bf 109s which destroyed two of 266 Sopw's Spitfires.

In the early afternoon, the *Luftwaffe* - convinced that the north of England had been stripped of fighters and AA defences in order to reinforce resistance in Southern England - committed the units of *Luftflotte* 5 to attack targets along the north-eastern coast of England and Scotland. As Bf 109s lacked the range to accompany these bombers, escort was provided by 21 Bf 110 D long-range fighters, but the raid was a disaster. *Luftflotte* 5 lost more than 20 aircraft and received a mauling so severe that it would take no further part in major daylight operations over Britain.



ABOVE: Waiting for the start, a pilot of III./JG 2 talks with ground crew at Osterley near Le Havre, mid-August 1940. Note the crude stippie finish, typical of III./JG 2 aircraft of this period, applied to tone down the fuselage sides.



ABOVE: Officers of III./JG 26 being briefed by Galland at Cañiers in mid-August. Galland maintained that a detailed and thoroughly understood pre-flight briefing was essential if operations were to be conducted successfully. JG 26 and JG 54 are thought to have been the two best units for adhering to this basic principle, particularly when bomber escort missions were the order of the day, and Galland held pilots personally responsible for any bomber losses. From left to right: The Gruppe surgeon, name unknown; Oblt. Gerhard Schipke; Oblt. Georg Beyer (POW 28 August 1940); Lt. Gerhard Müller-Dübe (KIA 18 August 1940); Lt. Josef Büschgens (POW 1 September 1940); Hptm. Adolf Galland (back to camera); Lt. Hans-Marquardt Christenmecke (killed - POW 6 September 1940); Lt. Walter Blume (POW 18 August 1940); Lt. Gustav Sprick (KIA 28 June 1941); Lt. Joachim Münchberg (KIA 23 March 1943); Oblt. Fritz Fromme and Hptm. Rolf Schöcker. On his last flight, Oblt. Beyer was involved in a fight with a Defiant when a Spitfire attacked from behind, wounding him and forcing him to bail out. Lt. Christenmecke was attacked by a fighter, forced landed at Hothfield and succeeded in setting fire to his aircraft, which completely burnt out, before being captured unharmed.



Further south, *Exp.Gr.* 210 carried out a bold, surprise low-level attack against the airfield at Martlesham Heath. Further formations with heavy fighter escort targeted Eastchurch, Portland, Rochester, Worthing Down, and Middle Wallop. One of the most difficult raids for the defenders to intercept was carried out by 88 Do 17s from KG 3 which were to attack the Rochester and Eastchurch airfields in north Kent. As well as being heavily escorted by more than 130 fighters from JG 51, JG 52 and JG 54, the bombers disguised their true objective by flying a dog-leg course and were accompanied by feint attacks. Then, as the bombers approached Deal, more than 60 Bf 109s from JG 26 swept in near Dover on a *freie Jagd* patrol. Three RAF squadrons

already airborne were diverted to meet this attack and another four squadrons scrambled, but the *Jagdflieger* protected their charges so effectively that it proved almost impossible for the British fighters to break through the German fighter screen. Only two of the Do 17s were shot down, and the RAF fighters suffered heavily in their attempts to stop this raid.

Shortly after 18.00 hrs *Exp.Gr.* 210 was once again in the air with the *Gruppenkommandeur*, Hptm. Walter Rubensdörffer leading his *Stabschwarm*, closely followed by 1. *Staffel* under Oblt. Martin Lutz and 2. *Staffel* under Oblt. Wilhelm-Richard Rössiger. This time their target was Kenley airfield but, owing to a low sun reflecting off an early evening haze, accurate orientation was difficult and soon

Rubensdörffer was heard querying his position. Whether JG 52's fighter escort had meanwhile missed the rendezvous over France, lost sight of Rubensdörffer's formation in the haze or, as the fighter pilots later claimed, had already withdrawn due to a shortage of fuel, would never become clear, but Rubensdörffer was heard to radio, "We've lost our escort". Then, seeing an airfield below, he radioed again: "There it is! Down we go!" and abruptly banked his aircraft in order to line up for his attack. Although taken by surprise, the other pilots followed him down in a low dive, attacking the hangars and buildings around the airfield with bombs, cannon and machine-guns. An armoury was set on fire, a number of hangars, factories and offices hit, and casualties numbered 68 killed and 192 injured.

But instead of attacking Kenley, the aircraft had struck the nearby airfield of Croydon, and as they withdrew, they were attacked by the Hurricanes of 32 and 111 Sqn, which cost the Gruppe seven Bf 110s including the whole *Stabskette*. The losses included the *Gruppenkommandeur*, Hptm. Rubensdörffer; the Gruppe's second-in-command, Oblt. Horst Feidler, who was captured severely wounded and died later; and the Gruppe's Technical Officer, Lt. Karl-Heinz Koch, who was captured outright. In addition, the



ABOVE: Yet another Staff emblem featuring an umbrella was that used for a short time by 3./JG 52, shown here on a pennant. When applied to the unit's aircraft, the black umbrella and bullets design was enclosed within a yellow shield, the whole being thinly outlined in red. Once the Staff was transferred to the Eastern Front in 1941, the emblem lost its relevance and fell into disuse.



LEFT: A Bf 109 E-3, believed to be from 3./*Freie Jagdgruppe* 210 at Denain, taxis from its camouflaged dispersal. The two wooden planks prevented the main undercarriage wheels from sinking into the soft earth.



ABOVE: Close up of the 'Rabbits' (Little Rascal) emblem of 2./JG 52.



ABOVE: Göring (in white summer uniform) with Milch (left) and Jeschonnek (right) discussing battle plans.

*Staffelkapitän* of the 3. *Staffel*, Lt. Horst Marx baled out and was taken prisoner when his Bf 109 E escort fighter was shot down by a Hurricane of 32 Sqn.

By the end of 15 August the *Luftwaffe* had flown over 2,000 sorties, destroyed 31 British fighters and damaged another 13. A total of 76 German aircraft was lost although, paradoxically, *Jagdflieger* combat losses were relatively few and amounted to just five Bf 109 fighter aircraft. Nevertheless, total German losses were the heaviest suffered over England in a single day during the entire Battle, and 15 August became known within the *Luftwaffe* as 'Black Thursday'.

Meanwhile, at the *Luftflotten* and *Fliegerkorps* commanders' conference at Karinhall, Göring criticised the attacks which had been carried out upon such secondary targets as the lightship bombed by Ju 87s the day previously, and questioned the value of continuing the attacks on radar stations. Above all, he found it necessary to remind the commanders of the *Luftflotten* and *Fliegerkorps* that their primary objective was to direct attacks exclusively against the RAF, with particular emphasis on the RAF fighter concentrations around London. More efficient use was to be made of the Bf 110 in deep penetration missions, and in view of the losses suffered by the Ju 87 units, each *Stukagruppe* would in future be escorted by three *Jagdgruppen*.

"The fighter escort defences of our Stuka formations must be re-adjusted, as the enemy is concentrating his fighters against our Stuka formations. It appears necessary to allocate three fighter Gruppen to each Stuka Gruppe; one of these fighter Gruppen remains with the Stukas and dives with them to the attack; the second flies ahead over the target at medium altitude and engages the fighter defences; the third protects the whole attack from above. It will also be necessary to escort Stukas returning from the attack over the Channel."

Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, Karinhall Conference, 15 August 1940: Paragraph 1 on an address to *Luftflotte* Senior Staff.

Despite the heavy bomber losses of the previous day, the *Luftwaffe*'s bombers were out in force again on the 16th and once more the targets were RAF airfields. Throughout the day these attacks, accompanied by numerous fighter escorts - and often preceded by fighters sweeping ahead of the bombers in *freie Jagd* sweeps - were aimed at Biggin Hill, Brooklands, Dover, Gosport, Hornchurch, Lee-on-Solent, Tangmere, Westhampnett and West Malling. Although Göring had queried the point of continuing the attacks on RDF stations, the one at Ventnor was attacked again after just coming back into service following the earlier attack on the 12th. This time the station was off the air for a further seven days. In the early evening further bombing attacks were carried out against Brize Norton, Farnborough and Harwell, while Manston airfield was again strafed by eight Bf 109s which destroyed a 65 Sqn Spitfire, a 600 Sqn Blenheim and damaged another. Manston was situated close to the coast and lacked any natural cover in which to disperse its fighters. As well as being subjected to carefully planned strafing attacks, any German aircraft with bombs or ammunition remaining was likely to use the airfield as a target of opportunity before heading back over the Channel.

At the end of the day's fighting, *Jagdflieger* combat losses almost doubled those of the 15th, with 12 fighters lost and a further eight damaged. Notable losses included the *Staffelkapitän* of 4./JG 3, Hptm. Alfred Müller who was wounded and rescued from the sea by the *Seenotdienst*, and the *Gruppenkommandeur* of II./JG 26, Hptm. Karl Ebbighausen who was killed when his aircraft was shot down by Spitfires off Dover.



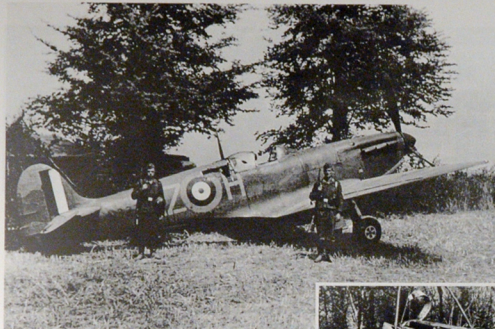
ABOVE: Provided no part of the internal aircraft structure was weakened, simple battle damage could be repaired in the field. Here a member of the ground staff patches bullet holes in the fuselage of a Bf 109 26 Bf 109 at Calfers.



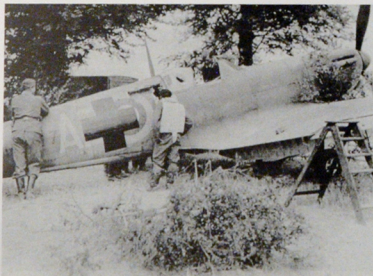
BELOW: Help for a downed aviator as an Fw 58 Weibel drops a lifebelt. Throughout the Battle, German air-sea rescue was highly organised and included rescue floats moored at various points in the Channel.



## August-September 1940



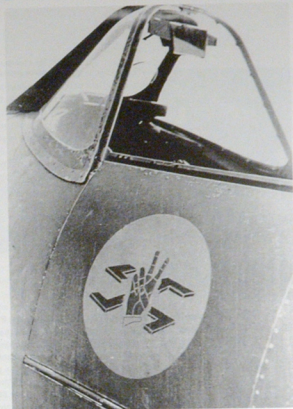
**THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE BOTTOM:** During the evening of 15 August 1940, two Spitfire Mk. I aircraft of A Flight, Red Section, 234 Sqn, were damaged in combat over the Channel and forced to land near Cherbourg. The aircraft, AZB and AZH, fell into Luftwaffe hands and the pilots, P/O V. Parker and P/O R. Hardy, were taken prisoner. It is clear from the propeller damage to P/O Parker's aircraft, AZB, that he landed with his wheels up, whereas Hardy's AZH landed with its wheels down. According to some sources, Hardy was forced to land by Oblt. Georg Claus of III./JG 55 and the Spitfire, already hit by machine-guns, was further damaged when the local flak opened fire and hit the aircraft behind the cockpit as it was landing. Another possibility is that the damage behind the cockpit was caused by the demolition charge activated to destroy the radio equipment. This aircraft was later transferred to Rechlin for testing, where it received the code '5 + 2'.



## August-September 1940



**ABOVE:** Pilot Officers 'Dick' Hardy (left) and 'Bush' Parker on the wing of a Spitfire. The Sergeant Pilot in the foreground is Polish pilot 'Zig' Klein.



**ABOVE:** A close up of the emblem seen on the cockpit doors (i.e. port side only) of both captured aircraft of 234 Sqn; a yellow disc containing a hand making the 'Churcheillian' V for Victory sign, superimposed over a broken Hakenkreuz.



RIGHT: Pw Christian Hansen of JG 53, the pilot of 'Grey 2' which forced landed on 16 August.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of II./JG 53 flown by Fw. Christian Hansen.

Coming down at Godshill, Isle of Wight, on 16 August, the Bf 109 E-4 'Grey 2' of II./JG 53 flown by Fw. Christian Hansen was the first recorded downing of a JG 53 machine carrying a red band around the cowling. In this instance the band being 6 inches wide. As the authors have been unable to locate any photographs of this machine, the illustration is based on photographs of other II./JG 53 aircraft of the period and item 11 in an A.I.1.(g) Crashed Enemy Aircraft Report dated 19.8.40. Although this report states that the fuselage number 2 was a white outline only, it is believed this is incorrect and has been shown here in the normal Staffel style. Although no mention was made of any special camouflage finish, this suggests a standard scheme for the period and is depicted accordingly in 02, 71 and 65 with the fuselage sides mottled with 02. According to one source, the guns and ammunition were removed from this crashed aircraft to arm a local Home Guard scout car.



ABOVE: Gefr. Karl Schulz of 6./JG 53 climbs out of his Bf 109 E-4 'Yellow 11'. On 16 August 1940, Schulz was wounded and shot down during combat over the Channel but was rescued by the Second Lieutenant.



ABOVE: Battle damage sustained by Ofw. Karl Schulz's 'White 3' of I./JG 51, Summer 1940. The kind of attack most feared by Luftwaffe fighter pilots operating over England in 1940 resulted from the RAF fighters first diving out of the sun, and then making a high speed vertical climbing attack from below to force into engine cooling system of the German fighters. Correctly executed, such an attack was almost guaranteed to result in a seized engine, a forced landing and an uncertain reception in hostile territory.



## 18 August

Following the intense action of the preceding two days, no daylight missions were flown on the 17th and apart from a few reconnaissance flights, the morning of the 18th was also quiet, giving no indication that the day would result in some of the fiercest fighting of the Battle. But the respite was brief and shortly after midday, Dover RDF station reported the greatest build-up of enemy forces yet seen as the Luftwaffe again focused its attention on the important airfields at Kenley, Biggin Hill, Hornchurch, and North Weald, upon which the fighter defences of south-eastern England hinged. Bombing and dive-bombing of these airfields was to be carried out by KG 1, KG 2, KG 53 and KG 76, with further dive-bombing attacks by StLG 3 and StLG 77 due to take place against the RDF station at Poling and airfields in West Sussex and Hampshire. Fighter escort and diversionary fighter sweeps in support of the attacks were to be provided by JG 3, JG 26, JG 27, JG 51, JG 52, JG 53, JG 54 and ZG 26.

The first attacks were carried out by Luftflotte 2's KG 1 and KG 76 against Biggin Hill and Kenley respectively. In addition, operating some 25 miles ahead of the incoming bombers, the BF 109s of JG 26 and JG 53 swept over the Kent and Sussex countryside on a free Jagd patrol. In Galland's absence, III./JG 26 was led on this occasion by the Staffelführer of 9./JG 26, Oblt. Gerhard Schöpel, and as the Gruppe crossed the coast shortly after 13.00 hrs, Schöpel saw below him the Hurricanes of 501 Sqn climbing in close formation. Deciding to attack the rearmost aircraft, he indicated to his pilots that they should cover him from above and began to stalk the British fighters. By carefully biding his time and keeping his aircraft between the glare of the sun and his intended victims, Schöpel was able to carry out a lone attack on the rear of the formation and, achieving complete surprise, shot down four Hurricanes in two minutes. At the time, this feat was unprecedented but, according to another German pilot flying with Schöpel, he would have continued to destroy more of the enemy aircraft but had to break off due to oil from one of his victims obscuring his windscreen.

The plan for KG 76's attack against Kenley called first for JG 88s from II./KG 76 to dive-bomb the airfield hangars and buildings. This attack was to be followed by the Do 17s of I. and II./KG 76 which were to bomb the landing ground and ground defences, after which 9./KG 76 was to follow up with a low-level attack to destroy any remaining buildings. However, due to cloudy conditions, the careful timing of the attack was disrupted. The bombers failed to rendezvous with their assigned fighter escort and 9./KG 76, which should have been last over the target, arrived first. Running into the full force of the airfield defences, the Staffel lost four of its nine bombers. Nevertheless, the combined attacks by KG 76 put Kenley out of action for two hours.

While the Kenley attack was in progress, Major Martin Mettig's JG 54 escorted 60 He 111s of KG 1 in a high-level attack against Biggin Hill. Arriving virtually unmolested by the defending British fighters, the Heinkels bombed the airfield but damage to vital areas was minimal. Most of the bombs fell onto the open areas of the airfield or in the woods beyond and the airfield was able to continue operating.

Over the Channel, 16 Bf 109s from 2. and 3./JG 52 led by Oblt. Wolfgang Ewald waited to provide cover for the returning bombers but, at around 14.00 hrs having completed their assignment without encountering any British fighters, they carried out instead a free Jagd sweep over Kent. Arriving over Manston at approximately 14.20 hrs, they caught the Spitfires of 266 Sqn on the ground while refuelling. Carrying out two rapid strafing attacks on the parked aircraft, they destroyed a Hurricane from 17 Sqn, two Spitfires and severely damaged another six Spitfires before making good their escape. RAF groundcrews, servicing the aircraft in the open, suffered one man killed and 15 injured.



ABOVE: The Kommodore of JG 54, Major Martin Mettig, led the 'Green Hearts' Geschwader from 2 February until 25 August 1940. As with many other commanding officers Mettig was considered too old to lead his unit and was replaced by the 28 year old Hauptmann Hannes Trautloft.

RIGHT: Almost always associated with JG 54, it is not generally appreciated that from 19 September 1939, Hptm. Hannes Trautloft was the Kommandeur of I./JG 20 (later III./JG 54) and did not join JG 54 as Kommodore until 25 August. This photograph shows Trautloft later in the war after he had received the Ritterkreuz, awarded on 27 July 1941.





## August-September 1940

## August-September 1940

At approximately 14.30 hrs, *Luftflotte 3* mounted the second major attack of the day when, in concert with a *freie Jagd* fighter sweep mounted by *JG 2*, the *Ju 87*s of *St.G 3* and *St.G 77* attacked the RDF station at Poling and south coast airfields. The *Stukas* of *I./St.G 3*, escorted by the *Bf 109*s of *Major Eduard Neumann's I./JG 27* struck the Gosport naval airfield at Lee-on-Solent while those of *I./St.G 77*, escorted by *Hptm. Werner Andres's II./JG 27* hit the Coastal Command airfield at Thorney Island. Further to the east, the *Ju 87*s of *II./St.G 77* with their escort from *Hptm. Joachim Schlichting's III./JG 27* attacked the naval airfield at Ford while the force from *III./St.G 77*, escorted by *Hptm. Albert Blumensaat's I./JG 53*, bombed Poling RDF station. All the airfields and Poling radar station suffered considerable damage, but as the *Ju 87*s formed up and withdrew, they were attacked by Spitfires and Hurricanes from three RAF fighter squadrons and no less than 16 of the *Ju 87*s were shot down plus two damaged beyond repair.

Shortly after 17.00 hrs, the day's third attack commenced when, again conducted by *Luftflotte 2*, 100-plus Dorniers and Heinkels from *KG 2* and *KG 53* set out to attack the airfields at Hornchurch and North Weald, escorted by some 140 *Bf 109*s and *Bf 110*s from *JG 3*, *JG 26*, *JG 51*, *JG 54* and *ZG 26*. Met by the determined opposition of eight squadrons of RAF fighters and hampered by increasing cloud over their assigned targets, both formations were forced to abandon their attacks and turn back. Re-crossing the English coast, *JG 53*, which had found North Weald covered in cloud, bombed Shoeburyness on its way home and *KG 2*, also aborting its attack on Hornchurch, bombed Deal and hit the Royal Marine barracks.

Thus ended a day which is recognised as one of the hardest fought of the Battle. Fighter Command had 73 fighters put out of action and a further 62 British aircraft were destroyed or damaged during the attacks on airfields. *Luftwaffe* combat losses, while not as high as those on the 15th, involved 61 aircraft shot down including a total of 15 *Bf 109*s with a further five damaged. *JG 27* suffered the highest casualties with six aircraft lost and three pilots killed, two taken prisoner and one rescued from the sea by the *Seenotdienst*. *JG 3* suffered the next highest casualties with three aircraft lost and three damaged, one of which was written-off. Of the pilots, the *Staffelkapitän* of *2./JG 3*, *Obit. Helmut Tiedmann* was captured, two from *II. Gruppe* were wounded, one of whom later died, and two from *III. Gruppe* were also killed in action. *JG 51's* losses included *Lt. Hans-Otto Lessing* and the *Staffelkapitän* of *5. Staffel*, *Hptm. Horst Tietzen*.



RIGHT: *Obit. Julius Neumann's* camouflaged *Bf 109 Yellow 5* of *6./JG 27* at *Crépon*, early August.



ABOVE AND BELOW: Two views of *Obit. Julius Neumann's Yellow 5* of *6./JG 27* showing the machine after crash-landing at *Crépon* in France following a mission over England, early August. Later, on 18 August, *Neumann* crash-landed again when, while escorting *Ju 87*s home from a raid on south coast airfields, his aircraft, *Yellow 6* received radiator damage during combat with RAF fighters over the Isle of Wight. After making a forced landing at *Shanklin Down*, he fired his flare pistol into the radio compartment of the aircraft in an attempt to set it on fire and prevent the RAF learning the frequencies. He spent the rest of the war as a POW in Canada but, post-war, rejoined the *Luftwaffe* and retired with the rank of *Oberst*. He revisited the site of his crash-landing in 1994.



## "...we saw several small black specks..."

WOLFGANG EWALD, JG 52

Wolfgang Ewald was appointed Kommandeur of JG 52 on 28 August 1940 and, in 1942, he took command of III/JG 3. He was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 9 December 1942, and on 14 July 1943 he was shot down by Russian AA fire and captured. He did not return to Germany until December 1949 and died on 24 February 1995.

I was born in Hamburg on 26 March, 1911, and obtained my pilot's licence in 1929. In 1934, I enlisted in the German Army as I wanted a career as a pilot. After military training I was posted to the *Flugführerschule* in Schleissheim and then I had to attend various courses in Dresden in order to become an officer.

In 1937, I joined the Legion Condor and was posted to the 2./J88 as a *Leutnant*. I claimed one victory before I was sent back to Germany and, soon afterwards, to Austria. Then I was posted to join the newly created JG 435 in Ingolstadt-Manching. Our *Gruppenkommandeur* was *Hptm.* Graf von Pfeil and Klein-Ellguth. I took over the 2. *Staffel* and for a little while *Obst.* Adolf Galland was *Staffelführer* of the 1. *Staffel* and *Lt.* Alois Klein had the 3. *Staffel*.

On 1 May 1939, the 1. *Gruppe* was redesignated and became JG 52. On 21 November 1939, the *Kommandeur* was severely burned during an aerial battle with a French Curtiss. By that time, Galland and Klein had been posted elsewhere and, as I was then the oldest *Staffelkapitän*, I took over the *Gruppe* on a temporary basis until relieved by the replacement *Gruppenkommandeur*, *Hptm.* von Eschwege.

The *Gruppe*'s performance during the campaign in the West was disappointing and we only had one claim. On 18 July, we were sent back to Neuruppin in the *Reich* to provide cover during an important meeting in Berlin. Later, on 21 July, we were sent to cover the Richard Wagner Festival in Bayreuth, so we did not return to the Channel coast until 3 August 1940.

We were based at Calais-Couquelles, and on 16 August we took off at 18.38 hrs to escort a bomber formation which was to attack the British airfield at Manston. We were flying about 1,000 metres beneath the clouds and as we approached the target we saw several small black specks flying towards the airfield. These were almost certainly British aircraft returning to land and I ordered my pilots to reduce speed and approach in line astern, as if we too were British fighters about to land. This ruse worked and we were able to approach the airfield without any trouble. Once we had flown to within a few hundred metres of the strip, I ordered my pilots to open fire and we succeeded in destroying several Spitfires which were dispersed around the airfield and two more which had just landed. One was set on fire and the other veered off to the side of the runway and formed a "Flieger Denkmal". We also fired at the airfield AA defences and silenced them. When we left, we could count five Blenheims and two Spitfires in flames, and we had also blown up an important fuel tank.

We returned to this same airfield two days later during a bomber escort mission over Kent. I had been informed by radio that a Spitfire squadron had just landed so I first ordered the 3. *Staffel*, which would attack. However, once I was certain that there were no Spitfires in the air either near the airfield or towards the coast, I also released the covering 3. *Staffel* and both the 2 and the 3 began the attack. Once we had silenced the AA defences, we were free to attack the aircraft on the ground and we destroyed ten Spitfires and three Blenheims.

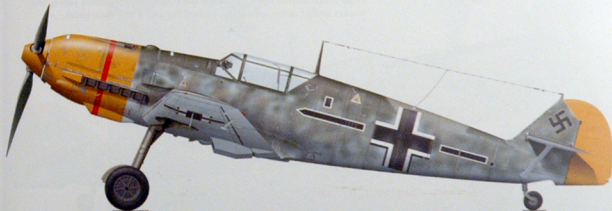
\* See account under 18 August for true RAF losses.



ABOVE: Bf 109 E from the Stabschwarm of JG 53, August 1940, clearly showing the red ring marking around its yellow engine cowlings. The troops to the right of the picture are being drilled by the NCO in the foreground.

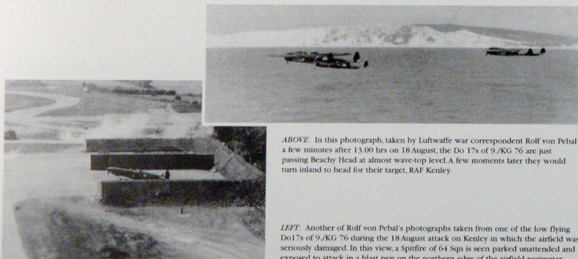
### Messerschmitt Bf 109 E, Stab/JG 53.

This Bf 109 E seen on a landing strip on the Channel coast during mid-August exhibited some curious markings. While the thin red band around the yellow cowlings suggest this is an aircraft of JG 53, the unusual Stab symbols imply that the aircraft may have belonged to JG 2 and a photograph shows this aircraft parked next to Helmut Wick's machine at Cherbourg in late September. At that time, JG 53 was based around Etaples, but it is entirely possible that the pilot may have been visiting JG 2. Finished in what is believed to be an OZ/71 finish, the sides of the fuselage and fin carry a dense mottle of what are believed to be the same two colours and like the cowlings, the rudder was also yellow. The narrow arms of the Balkenkreuz, while reminiscent of the very early style, appear in some views to show repainted areas which may indicate that the white areas had been altered to lessen their visibility.



ABOVE: In this photograph, taken by Luftwaffe war correspondent Rolf von Pebal a few minutes after 15.00 hrs on 18 August, the Do 17s of 9./KG 76 are just passing Beachy Head at almost wing-top level a few moments later they would turn inland to head for their target, RAF Kenley.

LEFT: Another of Rolf von Pebal's photographs taken from one of the low flying Do 17s of 9./KG 76 during the 18 August attack on Kenley in which the airfield was seriously damaged. In this view, a Spitfire of 64 Sqn is seen parked unattended and exposed to attack in a blast pen on the northern edge of the airfield perimeter.





## August-September 1940



**LEFT:** 'Black 13', the Bf 109 E of Hptm. Horst Tietzen, Staffelskapitän of 5./JG 51, sits beneath suspended camouflage netting at its dispersal. As the tailplane tips and the top segment of the rudder are painted yellow it is believed that this colour was also applied to the wing tips.

**BELOW:** Hptm. Horst Tietzen lost his life on 18 August when he was shot down over the Channel by P/O P. Zenker of 501 Sqn.



Emblem of 2./JG 3

**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 2./JG 3 flown by Oblt. Helmut Tiedmann.** Oblt. Helmut Tiedmann's Bf 109 E-4 'Black 13' of 2./JG 3 which forced landed near Leeds Castle, Kent, during the early afternoon of 18 August. Finished in an 02/71 upper scheme, the sides of the fuselage carried a mottle of 02 which was applied less densely on the sides of the cowlings towards the nose. The Tatzelwurm emblem was finished in the Staffel colour of red with a yellow tongue, and the top segment of the rudder and the tips of the wings and tailplanes were painted yellow. The forward section of the spinner was painted red with a thin white spiral.



## August-September 1940



**ABOVE AND BELOW:** Two views showing the Bf 109 E-4 WNr 1990, 'Black 13' of the Staffelskapitän of 2./JG 3, Oblt. Helmut Tiedmann after it was damaged in combat with RAF fighters and forced landed near Maidstone, Kent on 18 August 1940. Tiedmann, who escaped injury, managed to avoid capture for 12 hours before finally giving himself up. Although the RAF Intelligence Report on this aircraft states the spinner was red with white concentric bands, this is only partly correct as the red spinner was painted instead with a white spiral, as seen here. The aircraft has been partially camouflaged with bundles of corn to prevent any Luftwaffe attempt to destroy it before it may be examined.



## August-September 1940

**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 flown by Oblt. Gerhard Schöpfel, of III./JG 26.** The Bf 109 E-4 flown by Oblt. Gerhard Schöpfel of III./JG 26, circa 18 August. Finished in a high demarcation 02/71 finish, the top segment of the rudder and tips of the wings and tailplanes are painted yellow. A yellow pennant is attached to the antenna mast and beneath the cockpit is the red Hollenhund emblem of 9./JG26 and ahead of it, the JG 2 'Schlageter' shield. It was while flying this aircraft during the early afternoon of 18 August that Schöpfel shot down four Hurricanes of 501 Sqn near Canterbury.



Emblem of 9./JG 26.



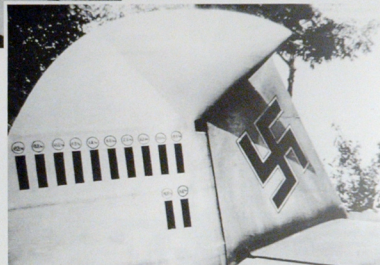
**BELOW:** 'Yellow 1', the Bf 109 E of Gerhard Schöpfel, in its revetment at Caffers. Branches have been placed along the wing leading edges to help camouflage the aircraft, although no effort has been made to cover the conspicuous yellow paint applied to the tips of the wings and tailplanes. This view also shows that the upper wing cross has been applied further inboard than usual.



## August-September 1940



**BELOW:** Close-up of the completed Abschnus tally with the four new kills applied to the rudder of Schöpfel's Bf 109.



**ABOVE:** A member of the ground crew applies one of the four Abschnus bars to the rudder of Gerhard Schöpfel's Bf 109 E following his victory over four Hurricanes of 501 Sqn on 18 August. Clearly visible in this view is the yellow segment to the top of the rudder and the yellow tips of the tailplanes.



**LEFT:** Gerhard Schöpfel, Staffelführer of 9./JG 26, in the cockpit of his Bf 109 E. On 28 August, Schöpfel became Kommandeur of III./JG 26 and, with 20 victories, received the Ritterkreuz on 11 September 1940. He later became Kommodore of JG 26, which he led from 6 December 1941 to 10 January 1943, and was later also Kommodore of JG 4 and JG 6.



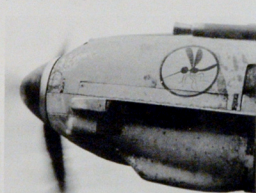
**RIGHT:** Uffz. Rudi Rothenfelder (left) of 9/JG 2 in conversation at Thévillie near Cherbourg on 18 August with two other members of III./JG 2: Pw. Peter Neumann-Merkel of 8. Staffel (centre) and Obdt. Bruno Stiller of 8. Staffel. It was Rothenfelder who designed the 9. Staffel 'Stechnicke' emblem. In the background are white-nosed Bf 110 Destroyers of the Zerstörergeschwader 'Horst Wessel', ZG 26.



**LEFT:** Busy airfield scene at Calais-Marck as Bf 109s from 3./JG 2 prepare for take off during the mid-summer of 1940. Ground crew obscure the fuselage markings on the nearest machine, but it appears to carry a Stab chevron ahead of the fuselage Balkenkreuz. The 1. Gruppe of JG 2 often flew as escort for the fighter-bombers of II. Gruppe.



**BELOW:** Close-up of the 'Stechnicke' badge of 9./JG 2 on the yellow engine cowling of a Bf 109 E.



**RIGHT:** Bf 109 Es of 9/JG 2 lined up at Oye-Plage. From the end of August, 9/JG 2 would spend almost four weeks at Oye-Plage and Calais-Marck before returning to Cherbourg.



## The Karinhall Conference of 19 August

**A**fter reviewing the results of a week of ferocious fighting which had concluded with the bitter battles and heavy losses of the 18th, it became clear to Göring that further directives were needed to ensure the swift destruction of the enemy air force. On 19 August, for the second time in a week, he therefore summoned his commanders to attend a meeting at Karinhall. Highest losses of all had been suffered by the Stukagruppen which, in the previous two weeks, had carried out fourteen major attacks but had lost 39 aircraft. With the catastrophic loss of an additional 18 aircraft on 18 August, Obdt. decided that in order to prevent their complete destruction, the Stukagruppen were to be withdrawn until such time as the RAF had been defeated.



**ABOVE:** The Kommodore of JG 2 and his successor. Shown here at the beginning of September is Oberleutnant Harry von Bülow-Bolskamp (right) and the new commander of JG 2, Major Wolfgang Scheilmann. A former Staffelführer of 1./JG 2 in Spain, Scheilmann claimed seven victories during the campaign in the West and was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 18 September 1940. He remained Kommodore of JG 2 until 20 October 1940 when he left to command JG 27.

**RIGHT:** Obdt. Heinz Leismann, of the Stab I./JG 52, seen with his 'Black 8' at Calais after a mission over England, August 1940. He is wearing the later, inflatable life-jacket. At the end of August, he left the Gruppenstab to take over 2./JG 52 as successor to Obdt. Wolfgang Fwald. He was later awarded the Ritterkreuz.



**ABOVE:** Lt. Helmut Bernemann, Gruppenadjutant of 1./JG 52, wearing an early kayak Schwimmweste. The fine, fibrous filling of these life-jackets was quite solid and made a bulky item of equipment in the narrow confines of the Bf 109's cockpit. Nevertheless, this item was preferred to the later inflatable life-jacket, which pilots feared could be too easily punctured in combat.

Confronting his *Jagdwaife* Kommodore with the heavy bomber losses, Göring complained that the fighters lacked aggressiveness and refused to acknowledge that the main weakness lay in faulty planning and technical shortcomings which rendered the Ju 87s and Bf 110s particularly vulnerable to fighter attack. Instead, Göring blamed the fighter pilots for the high Ju 87 and Bf 110 losses, criticised the standard of escort and protection, and ordered a complete reorganisation and redeployment of the *Jagdgeschwader*.

Göring also believed that the overall morale and fighting spirit of the *Jagdwaife* would improve through the appointment of younger officers to positions of command. At this time, many of the *Gruppen* were commanded by officers who had been pilots in the First World War and Göring considered them either too old or lacking the necessary aggressive spirit. Accordingly, several *Jagdgeschwader* Kommodore were dismissed and replaced by such younger pilots as Galland, Trautloft, Lützow and Scheilmann, all of whom had proved successful on operations. The fighter force was the first branch of the *Luftwaffe* to be so rejuvenated and, as a general rule, age limits would henceforth be 32 for a *Geschwaderkommodore*, 30 for a *Gruppenkommandeur* and 27 for a *Staffelkapitän*. The result of this change was that in most cases the commander of a *Geschwader*, a *Gruppe* or a *Staffel* was also the most skilful pilot and the one with the greatest number of victories.

Contrary to what has previously been written, Göring did not at this time order the majority of the fighter force to carry out close escort missions. While the bomber crews attached extraordinary importance to close escort and demanded the allocation of more fighters to this role, it would have been a purely defensive measure not in keeping with the aggressive character of the *Jagdwaife*. Such an order would have tied the fighters so closely to the bombers that they would have been deprived of the freedom to seek out and destroy Britain's fighter force, a task which was, after all, *ObdL*'s primary objective. Göring therefore directed that commanders of fighter units should, as far as possible, be given a completely free hand in the conduct of operations, stating:

"Only part of the fighters are to be employed as direct escorts to our bombers. The aim must be to employ the strongest possible fighter forces on free-lance operations, in which they can indirectly protect the bombers, and at the same time come to grips under favourable conditions with the enemy fighters."



RIGHT: Operating under Luftwaffe 2 and 3, the He 111 equipped five Kampfgeschwader and two independent Kampfgruppen during the Battle. Here, Luftwaffe ground crew carry out a double engine change on an He 111 from Stab/KG 4. As is evident from its markings, the crane being used to replace the starboard propeller is ex-RAF property.

However, these measures were accompanied by two further demands, the first of which concerned the two-engined Bf 110 *Zerstörer* units. When the Bf 110 units were first formed, it was intended to use them as long-range fighters, but the course of the Battle so far had confirmed that the Bf 110 was unable to give a good account of itself. Despite its concentrated firepower and defensive weapons, in combat with British fighters it was inevitably singled out for attack and forced to fly in defensive circles. The Bf 110s therefore had to rely on Bf 109s coming to their assistance or else escape as best they could. In future, then, when used as escort fighters, the Bf 110s were themselves to be provided with a fighter escort of Bf 109s. The second demand was that specially designated fighter units should be made available to provide protection over the Channel for fighter, bomber and destroyer aircraft returning from operations over England. Thus the demand to simultaneously employ the strongest number of aircraft on *freie Jagd* sweeps, provide more fighters as close escort, and yet more to meet returning aircraft, placed an excessive strain on resources due to the number of aircraft and pilots all such tasks required.

## "Any hopes we still had of taking off were now gone."

HELMUT MAUL, JG 51

I entered the *Luftwaffe* in 1935 and received my pilot instruction in 1937, first at the *A-Schule* in Quedlinburg, then the *B-Schule* in Schleissheim and finally the *C-Schule* in Fürth. Having finished this long and thorough training, I chose to become a fighter pilot and was posted again, this time to the *Jagdschule* in Schleissheim. My training there ended with several examinations which I passed successfully, and on 11 July 1940, as a newly qualified fighter pilot, I was posted to join the 1/JG 51 at Bad Abding. In this unit I found myself in contact with some experienced pilots including two, Heinz Bar and Hermann Friedrich Joppien, who later became aces and were awarded the *Eichenlaub*. After a successful campaign in the West, our unit was transferred to Leeuwarden in Holland then, on 12 July, we were ordered to transfer to St. Ingelbert in France in order to take part in the battle against England. The very next day we carried out our first mission to the English coast, during which we flew England regularly at least once every day and sometimes two or three times a day.

The 20 August was particularly hard for me. We took off at 15.20 hrs and flew to the Thames Estuary. My Bf 109 E, 'White 6', received hits in the engine and I was soon obliged to land on the water, not far from the English coast. I only just had time to leave the aircraft, which sank very quickly. In spite of all my efforts, I soon discovered that my *Schwimmveste* would not inflate and although I did my best to keep myself on the surface, trying to swim in the large waves with my heavy flying suit and boots was quite a struggle. I knew that very soon I would be exhausted and sink under the waves. Fortunately, however, I was seen by one of our *Seenotflieger*. We had several operating over the sea whenever we flew combat missions and they had already succeeded in rescuing a number of our pilots. It flew down towards me and released a dinghy, but I was unable to reach it. The seaplane then turned, flew over me again and released a second dinghy, but once more I was completely unable to swim to it. Later, the pilot told me they were apprehensive about landing on the water because they knew they would not be able to take off again in such sea conditions but, faced with the situation, the crew decided that rather than fly off and leave me to drown, they would risk their lives to save mine.

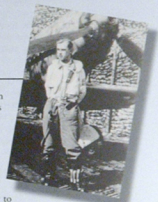
The seaplane made a successful landing on the water and the crew threw me a third dinghy attached to a line. This dinghy landed just a few metres away and despite the fact that I was now completely exhausted, I managed to reach it and climb aboard. Then the crew pulled the dinghy to their aircraft and hauled me into the fuselage.

I thought I had been saved, but this was not at all the case and I was soon disappointed to hear that the crew thought they would not be able to take off again because of the waves. Worse, they feared that the weather would turn into a storm. Using his engines, the pilot tried to keep the aircraft turned into the wind so that we would not be swamped by the waves, but then one wave, higher than the others, struck us and damaged one of the propellers. Any hopes we still had of taking off were now gone.

All this time, the radio operator on the aircraft had been continuously sending messages explaining our situation and we learned that a rescue boat had been sent to find us. But when it reached our reported position, the crew could find nothing; the current had carried us some miles away from where the aircraft had first landed, and now we were drifting towards a minefield!

At last, after three hours, we heard the sound of an engine and we fired a signal cartridge. It was now late evening and the falling light helped the rescue boat's crew to see the flare. By the time the rescue boat reached us, our aircraft had taken quite a battering from the wind and the seas. The wings were damaged and one engine rendered useless. After a great deal of difficulty and with the help of ropes, we were all eventually able to abandon the seaplane and climb safely aboard the rescue boat. We finally arrived back in France at 05.00 hrs the next morning, exhausted but alive!

Eleven days later, I resumed flying missions against England. In January 1941, I spent some time as a flying instructor before joining JG 1 and then JG 11. I ended the war with JG 1.





## Change of unit commanders in the Jagdwaffe between August and October 1940

The following tables show the changes which took place in the Jagdwaffe between July and December 1940. It should be noted that not all these changes resulted from a programme to replace the older commanding officers with younger men. Some changes resulted from promotions, i.e. when a replacement was required for a Gruppenkommandeur promoted to Geschwaderkommodore or as a result of combat losses.

### LUFTLOTTE 2

#### Jagdfliegerführer 2

Unit	Previous commander	Later commander	Date of take-over
Stab/JG 3	Obstlt. Carl Viek	Major Günther Lützow	22 Aug 40
I./JG 3	Hptm. Günther Lützow (Lützow became Kommodore)	Hptm. Hans von Hahn*	22 Aug 40
II./JG 3	Hptm. Erich von Selle	Hptm. Erich von Selle	(no change)
III./JG 3	Hptm. Walter Klenitz	Hptm. Wilhelm Bathusar	8 Aug 40
Stab/JG 26	Major Gotthard Handrick	Major Adolf Galland	22 Aug 40
I./JG 26	Hptm. Kurt Fischer	Hptm. Rolf Pingel	22 Aug 40
II./JG 26	Hptm. Karl Ebbighausen (Ebbighausen was killed on 16 Aug 40)	Hptm. Erich Bode	16 Aug 40
III./JG 26	Major Adolf Galland (Galland became Kommodore)	Major Gerhard Schöpfel	22 Aug 40
Stab/JG 51	Oberst Theo Osterkamp	Obstlt. Werner Mölders	27 Jul 40
I./JG 51	Hptm. Hans-Heinrich Brustellin	Hptm. Hermann-Friedrich Joppin	1 Oct 40
II./JG 51	Hptm. Günther Matthes	Hptm. Günther Matthes	(no change)
III./JG 51	Hptm. Hannes Trautloft (Trautloft became Kommodore of JG 54)	Hptm. Walter Oesau	25 Aug 40
Stab/JG 52	Major Hubertus Meierhard von Bernegg	Major Hanns Trübenbach	Aug 40
I./JG 52	Hptm. Siegfried von Eschwege	Hptm. Wolfgang Ewald	27 Aug 40
II./JG 52	Hptm. von Hans-Günter Kornatzki	Hptm. Wilhelm Ensslen	27 Aug 40
III./JG 52	Major Alexander von Winterfeldt (Gruppe transferred to Germany from Coqueles on 25 Aug 40 because of heavy losses)	Major Alexander von Winterfeldt	(no change)
Stab/JG 54	Major Martin Mettig	Major Hannes Trautloft	25 Aug 40
I./JG 54	Hptm. Hubertus von Bonin	Hptm. Hubertus von Bonin	(no change)
II./JG 54	Hptm. Otto Winterer	Hptm. Dietrich Hrabak	26 Aug 40
III./JG 54	Hptm. Fritz Uitsch (Uitsch was killed on 5 Sep 40)	Oblt. Günther Scholz (acting)	5 Sept 40
I./JG 77	Hptm. Johannes Janke	(became IV./JG 51 on 25 Aug 40)	
I./JG 77	Oblt. Herbert Ihlefeld	Oblt. Herbert Ihlefeld	(no change)

### LUFTLOTTE 3

#### Jagdfliegerführer 3

Unit	Previous commander	Later commander	Date of take-over
Stab/JG 2	Oberst Harry von Bülow-Bothkamp	Major Wolfgang Schellmann (Major Helmut Wick took over on 20 Oct 40)	3 Sep 40
I./JG 2	Major Hennig Strümpell	Hptm. Helmut Wick	10 Sep 40
II./JG 2	Major Wolfgang Schellmann	Hptm. Karl-Heinz Greisert	3 Sep 40
III./JG 2	Major Erich Mix	Oblt. Otto Bertram (Hptm. Hans 'Assi' Hahn* took over on 1 Oct 40)	15 Sep 40
Stab/JG 27	Obstlt. Max Ibel	Major Bernhard Woldenga	15 Oct 40
I./JG 27	Major Edward Neumann	Major Eduard Neumann	(no change)
II./JG 27	Hptm. Werner Andres	Hptm. Wolfgang Lippert	1 Oct 40
III./JG 27	Hptm. Joachim Schlichting	Hptm. Max Dobislav	18 Sep 40
Stab/JG 53	Obstlt. Hans-Jürgen von Cramon-Traubadel	Major Günther von Maltzahn	10 Oct 40
I./JG 53	Major Albert Blumensaat	Hptm. Hans-Karl Meyer	Aug 40
II./JG 53	Hptm. Günther von Maltzahn (von Maltzahn became Kommodore)	Hptm. Heinz Bretznitz	10 Oct 40
III./JG 53	Hptm. Hans Joachim Harder (Harder was killed on 13 Aug 40)	Major Wolf Dietrich Wicke	13 Aug 40

### LUFTLOTTE 5

#### X.Fliegerkorps

Unit	Previous commander	Later commander	Date of take-over
Stab/JG 77	Obstlt. Eitel-Fritz Roediger von Manteuffel	Major Bernhard Woldenga	3 Nov 44
II./JG 77	Hptm. Karl Hentschel	Hptm. Karl Hentschel	(no change)

\*Hans von Hahn (born on 7 Aug 1914 in Frankfurt) should not be confused with Hans 'Assi' Hahn (born on 14 Apr 1914 in Gotha)

# August-September 1940

## 20 August - 6 September The Battle of the Airfields

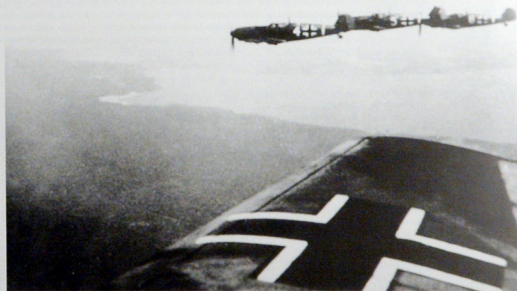
*"To sum up: we have reached the decisive period of the air war against England. The vital task is to turn all means at our disposal to the defeat of the enemy Air Force. Our first aim is the destruction of the enemy's fighters. If they no longer take to the air, we shall attack them on the ground, or force them into battle by directing bomber attacks against targets within the range of our fighters. At the same time, and on a growing scale, we must continue our activities against the ground organisation of the enemy bomber units. Surprise attacks on the enemy aircraft industry must be made by day and night. Once the enemy Air Force has been annihilated, our attacks will be directed against other vital targets".*

*Directives issued by Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring, Second Karinhall Conference, 19 August 1940*

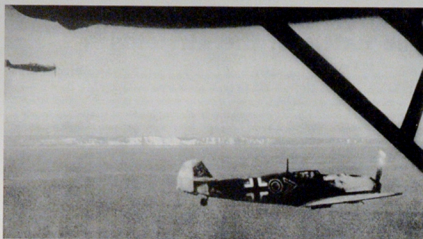
Continuing adverse weather during the period 20-23 August again restricted Luftwaffe daylight operations and brought a period of relatively reduced activity, although the 20th is notable as the date on which Hptm. Walter Oesau of JG 51 received the Ritterkreuz for his 20 victories, the fifth pilot to reach this score.

On the 21st, the Luftwaffe began redeploying its fighter units since recent operations had revealed that the operational radius of the Bf 109 was limiting the extent to which these aircraft could penetrate English airspace. On average, the fighters of Luftflotte 2 based in the Pas de Calais were able to reach London and spend only a maximum of ten minutes in combat before they had to return to their bases. Even worse, because of the greater width of the Channel near Luftflotte 3's fighter airfields, Bf 109 units flying from the Cherbourg area had to return soon after crossing the English coast. Running out of fuel was therefore a risk that Bf 109 pilots constantly faced and they could quite easily find themselves with insufficient fuel for a safe return to France. They were only too well aware that ditching was a dangerous business, landing in the water at 100mph being equivalent to hitting a brick wall.

**RIGHT:** Photographed from an aircraft of a Schwarm returning from a mission, three Bf 109s of 7./JG 53, White '4', '5' and '8' are seen flying above the Seine Bay on 25 August. Note that the III. Gruppe wavy line symbol has now been replaced by a vertical bar.



**RIGHT:** Bf 109 E8, believed to be from JG 3, patrolling the Channel. The Stab markings ahead of the fuselage Balkenkreuz are those of the Gruppe Technischer Offizier, although pilots occupying this position did not necessarily possess any engineering qualifications or, indeed, any technical experience. Although flying missions in the normal way on the ground his duty was purely administrative; he had to ensure that as many aircraft as possible were available for operations.



There were only a few of us who had not yet had to ditch in the Channel with a shot-up aircraft or stationary propeller.

Oblt. Hans von Hahn of I./JG 3 commenting on the ever-present obstacle facing the pilots of the Jagdflotte – the English Channel

It was therefore reasoned that a tactical advantage would be gained by transferring the majority of the Jagdgeschwader of Luftflotte 3 to Kesseling's Luftflotte 2 in the Pas de Calais area. However, while this decision increased to 18 the number of Jagdgruppen available to Luftflotte 2 and made more fighters available to meet Göring's latest directive, the scarcity of fighters left to Luftflotte 3 would later lead to escalating losses, especially amongst the Bf 110 *Zerstörergruppe* during the September raids.

At this time, Oblt. had already observed that Fighter Command was, wherever possible, trying to avoid contact with German fighters in order to preserve its strength and meet the greater threat posed by the bombers. If the RAF was to be destroyed, it first had to be brought into the air to fight and with fine weather on the morning of the 24th, the *Luftwaffe* returned in force. For Fighter Command, this was the crisis of the battle. Massive *Luftwaffe* bombing attacks concentrated on the vital airfields in Kent, Surrey and Sussex and were accompanied by raids carried out against harbour facilities and rail systems. All these raids were co-ordinated with complex fighter sweeps aimed at catching Fighter Command's squadrons on the ground. For the *Luftwaffe*, these operations proved difficult, however, as the airfields were protected by light and medium anti-aircraft guns and were frequently empty, the British aircraft having already taken off or dispersed to other airfields. Moreover, airfields were well camouflaged and not always easy to locate. Indeed, when Fr. Werner Gottschalk made an emergency landing at Hawkinge a few days later, he stated that he had not recognised this as an aerodrome from the air.

Following early morning feints and *freie Jagd* patrols to clear the airspace ahead, a heavily escorted large scale attack was carried out against Dover, and shortly after midday an attack was made on Manston by a force of 50-plus Ju 88's and He 111s. The Defiants of 264 Sqn were scrambled, but before they could engage the attackers, three of them were lost, two possibly shot down by JG 3's *Hptm*. Günther Lützow. The major activity of the afternoon started at around 15.00 hrs when attacks were aimed simultaneously at Hornchurch and North Weald, while an attack on Manston by the specialist crews of *Erprobungsgruppe* 210 forced its closure as an



**BELOW:** Personnel of 7./JG 26 photographed prior to 28 August. They are from left to right: Lt. Klaus Mettusch, Lt. Josef Büschgens (P/W 1 September), the Staffkapitän of 7. Staffel, Oblt. Georg Beyer (captured on 28 August after being shot down over Canterbury), and a fourth, non-flying officer named Mehrhoff. Lt. Mettusch, who would later be awarded the Oak Leaves, had his first victory claim on 31 May and his second, a Hurricane, on 31 August. Lt. Büschgens would claim his 9th victory on 25 August and Oblt. Beyer has seventh and last, over a Spitfire, on 15 August.

operational airfield for the next thirty-six hours. Then, between 16.00-17.00 hrs, 71 Bf 109s from JG 2, JG 27 and JG 53, together with 99 Bf 110s from ZG 2, ZG 76 and V./LG 1, escorted 46 Ju 88s to attack Portsmouth and Southampton where heavy damage and casualties were caused. A final daylight incursion over Britain involved a *freie Jagd* sweep by 100-plus fighters over Kent. During the day's operations, 32 RAF aircraft were destroyed or damaged, 22 of these being single-engine fighters declared destroyed, lost or missing.

Despite suitable weather on the 25th, and numerous *freie Jagd* missions over the Channel, the first major activity of the day did not take place until 17.00 hrs when a force of more than 300 German fighters comprising 214 Bf 109s from JG 2, JG 27 and JG 53 and 103 Bf 110s from ZG 2, 76 and V./LG 1 escorted 37 Ju 88s to attack Warmwell. Shortly after this, a second attack developed over Kent and the Thames Estuary. Although this was diverted from its intended targets by fierce resistance from the defending fighters, Fighter Command losses for the day amounted to 15 single-engine fighters. One of these was a Spitfire from 616 Sqn flown by Sgt. P. Wareing, shot down over the French coast. He was later taken to 2./JG 52's airfield at Coquelles, near Calais, where he was entertained in the NCO's mess. On this day, too, a returning crew from ZG 76 reported that they had seen two Spitfires collide in mid-air, disintegrate and crash while attempting to attack the same Bf 110.

It will be seen from the above that in order to provide adequate protection for the bombers and at the same time have enough fighters available to pursue their real task of destroying the enemy in combat, the ratio of fighters to bombers far exceeded one to one. Unfortunately, however, at this time the *Luftwaffe* had no standard tactical procedure, nor any unified plan, so that escort missions were left to the *Geschwaderkommandeure* who acted as he thought best. Thus the quality of the performance attained in these missions varied considerably; some *Geschwader* – particularly JG 26 and JG 54 – executed their duties in an extremely efficient manner, while others performed less than satisfactorily. Only later in the Battle were tactics standardised.

## “Flying over the Channel was hard on our nerves”

RUDOLF ROTHENFELDER, JG 2

**W**e flew continuous sorties over England until 25 August, but the objectives were constantly changed. At one time the Royal Air Force was the target so that we could achieve air superiority, then we had to fly escort missions to ensure the bombers reached their targets: Brighton, Winchester, Portsmouth, Chichester and Southampton. In addition, there were take-off alerts and we sometimes had to escort the rescue units which pulled our comrades out of the ‘drink’. These operations were flown either from the airfield at Cherbourg-Théville or the one at Le Havre. For us fighter pilots, the big difference was that from Cherbourg we had to fly 120 km in order to reach the other side of the Channel, whereas from Le Havre the distance was about 170 km. Our *Geschwader*, JG 2, was very successful during these battles and up to 25 August 1940 we had shot down more than 250 British aircraft. We also suffered losses ourselves, some pilots ending up as POWs and being sent to POW camps in Canada.

Flying over the Channel was hard on our nerves. The gliding ratio of the Bf 109 E was 12:1 so that if we received a hit in the radiator while we were flying at 8,000 metres, for example, we could calculate how far we could glide by multiplying our height by 12, i.e. 8 x 12 = 96 km. This meant that from the Isle of Wight we could glide to a point about 30 km from the French coast. Not everyone could withstand this burden upon his shoulders and some were sent back to Germany to regain their nerve.

The score of victories in our 9. *Staffel* at this time was nothing to write home about. On 15 August, we flew a fighter sweep mission (*freie Jagd*) from Cherbourg to Portland, taking off at 17.50 hrs and landing at 19.25 hrs. Oblt. Hannes Röhder shot down a Hurricane, but otherwise very few Tommies came up to engage us so that when we saw a large number of barrage balloons below us, we attacked them instead and shot down six.

On 28 August, our II. *Gruppe* transferred to Oye Plage, east of Calais. The I and II *Gruppen* and the *Geschwader Stab* were also relocated to the Calais area, where they were based at Mardijk airfield. During this time, the night of the *Luftwaffe* was concentrated for air raids on London and the industrial complexes located there, such as the docks at Tilbury, the Redhill area and the Isle of Sheppey. We yearned for ‘Operation Sealion’, the invasion of Britain, but unfortunately it did not take place.

Once, during an air combat with eight Spitfires over the Isle of Sheppey, my wingman, *Gefreiter* Schaar, and I had to beat a hasty retreat. I returned to Oye Plage with a shot-up propeller hub and Schaar's aircraft was also damaged. I saw him turn toward the Channel with a smoking engine. He bailed out at about 800 metres over the water and was rescued from the ‘drink’ after three hours by an He 59.





## August-September 1940

**BELOW:** This photograph of Uffz. Karl-Heinz Böck's Bf 109 E-1 serves to illustrate the appearance of Oblt. Müncheberg's aircraft, depicted in the accompanying profile and for which no suitable photograph exists. Uffz. Böck, flying an aircraft very similar in appearance to Müncheberg's, forced landed this aircraft at Broomhall Farm, near Rye, on the afternoon of 17 September. He was on a freelance fighter sweep in London, suffered engine failure, forced landed and was captured unhurt.



**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 flown by Oblt. Joachim Müncheberg, Staffelführer of 7./JG 26,**

'White 1' the Bf 109 E-4 of Oblt. Joachim Müncheberg, Staffelführer of 7./JG 26 as it is believed to have appeared, circa 24 August. As was usual with the aircraft of III./JG 26, the Balkenkreuz, aircraft number and Gruppe symbol were of smaller proportions than usual and the 65 fuselage sides lacked mottling although some was carried on the fin, probably in 02. Upper camouflage colours were 02/71 and a white pennant was carried on the antenna mast. The entire engine cowling was roughly painted yellow back to the base of the windscreen, leaving the white background to the 7. Staffel heart emblem with an irregular white border. The rudder was yellow with a small section left in the original 65 on which were painted Müncheberg's fourteen Abschnitz bars in red. This profile is based on a poor quality photograph, regrettably not suitable for publication, which also shows the very similar Bf 109 E-1, 'White 2', of 7./JG 26. A photograph of 'White 2', taken after Uffz. Karl-Heinz Böck forced landed at Rye on 17 September, shows the similarity in the finish.



Staffel emblem of 7./JG 26.



## August-September 1940



**LEFT:** 'White 9', a Bf 109 E-4 of 7./JG 26 undergoes an engine change at Caffers in mid-August. Finished with an 02/71 upper surface with the high demarcation between the upper and lower colours in keeping with III. Gruppe practice, the fuselage Balkenkreuz, aircraft number and Gruppe bar are of smaller proportions than usual. While most of the rudder is yellow, a segment has been left in the original Blue 65 to record the pilot's Abschnitz tally.

**BELOW:** 'Yellow 9' of 9./JG 26 photographed while undergoing open-air maintenance at Caffers during the middle of August. The Klemm Ki 35 in the background was coded 'NR+NN' and was used by the Staffel as a communications or 'back' aircraft.



**LEFT:** Closer view of 9./JG 26's Klemm 'NR+NN' clearly showing the 'Schlageter' emblem.



**LEFT:** With its nose pushed inside a temporary hangar to provide some shelter from the weather, this Bf 109 will have its engine changed. New DB 601 engines are contained in the packing cases in the foreground. Note the familiar Daimler-Benz trade-mark stenciled on the case.

## August-September 1940



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 W.Nr.5587 of 6./JG 51 flown by Ofw. Fritz Becek. 'Yellow 10', the Bf 109 E-4 flown by Ofw. Fritz Becek of 6./JG 51, who was forced to land at East Langdon on the afternoon of 24 August after his engine failed following combat with R.A.F. fighters near Manston. Finished in an upper surface scheme of 02/71, the sides of the fuselage and fin are covered in a fairly dense mottling of both of these colours. The top segment of the rudder and tips of both wings and tailplanes were painted yellow, as was the background of the shield. The spinner was painted half white, half 70 or black, and three yellow Abschuß bars were marked on each side of the fin.



Emblem of 6./JG 51.



## August-September 1940



THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE: Bf 109 E-4, W.Nr.5587, 'Yellow 10' of 6./JG 51. At 08.00 hrs on 24 August, 29-year-old Ofw Fritz Becek took off to escort about twenty bombers which were to attack Manston aerodrome. This flight lasted about an hour and Becek returned to his base where, after a quick lunch, he set off again with about seven other aircraft from 6./JG 51 and some from 2. Staffel. Again they escorted about twenty bombers attacking Manston airfield, but this time Becek became involved in a dogfight with a number of Hurricanes and a few Spitfires. Although Becek was unaware of it, his aircraft was hit in the fuselage and engine, and on the way home an oil duct broke and his engine began to falter. Ofw. Becek was therefore obliged to make a forced landing at East Langdon, Kent, where, at 12.55 hrs, he was captured unhurt by a local policeman who arrived on the scene as Becek's aircraft did to a halt. Ofw. Becek had previously carried out operational flying in Belgium and France and had escorted Ju 88s and He 111s in raids against Britain. On the tail of his aircraft were three yellow victory stripes with the dates 7.7.40, 29.7.40 and 15.8.40 marked above them. The rear fuselage of his machine carried the II Gruppe weeping bird emblem complete with umbrella (a parody of Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain) and the legend 'Gott strafe England' ('God Punish England').





## August-September 1940



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Two Australian soldiers pose with Becc's Bf 109 E before it was moved to the collecting point for downed Luftwaffe aircraft at Ilham.



RIGHT AND BELOW: Becc's E-4, WNr 5587, lying partially dismantled in a field at Ilham on the North Downs in Southern England. The 'weeping bird' emblems have been 'liberated' from each side of the rear fuselage. It is interesting to speculate where they might be now, 60 years after the event.



## August-September 1940

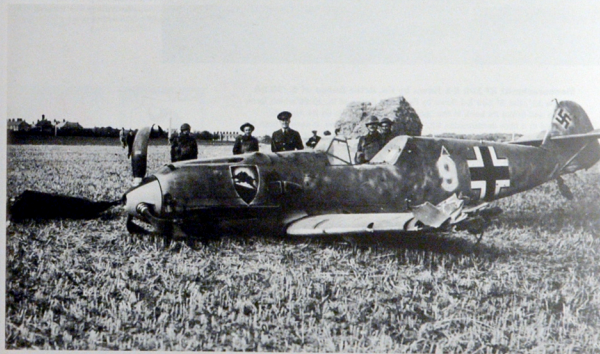


Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Fw. Herbert Bischoff, 1./JG 52.

'White 9', the Bf 109 E-1 of Fw. Bischoff of the Coquelles-based 1./JG 52 was forced to land at Westgate as a result of combat damage during the mid-afternoon of 24 August. This aircraft was fitted with an early style canopy, but featured pilot's back armour and a rear-view mirror. Finished in a 70/71 upper camouflage scheme, the sides of the fuselage, fin and rudder carried a heavy mottle believed to have been in the uppersurface colours. The light coloured square on both sides of the fin behind the swastikas suggests that they had been masked off while the mottling was applied. The 1./JG 52 'Running Boar' emblem was applied to both sides of the cowlings and the spinner was painted half white and half black or 70.



Emblem of 1./JG 52.



ABOVE: This Bf 109 E-1 'White 9' of 1./JG 52 forced landed in a field near Westgate-on-Sea during the mid-afternoon of 24 August. The pilot, Fw. Herbert Bischoff, had been flying as part of a formation of fighters carrying out what he described as an 'aggressive patrol'. While flying at 18,000 feet near London, he was surprised from behind by fighters which damaged his engine and radiator. When his engine seized, Fw. Bischoff forced landed in a cornfield and although part of his port wing was torn off when his aircraft hit an electricity pylon, he was captured unharmed.

## August-September 1940



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Fw. Artur Beese of 9./JG 26 'Yellow 11', the Bf 109 E-1 flown by Fw. Artur Beese of 9./JG 26 which force-landed and broke its back in the sand dunes near Calais on 24 August. Finished in a high demarcation 02/71 camouflage scheme, it carried both the 'Schlageter' and red 'Hollenhund' emblems beneath the cockpit. The fuel triangle on this aircraft was white with a yellow border and, in keeping with 11./JG 26 practice, the aircraft number, Balkenkreuz and III. Gruppe bar were applied in a smaller size than usual.



Script 'S' badge of JG 26.



'Hollenhund' emblem of 9./JG 26.



LEFT AND ABOVE: Two views of the Bf 109 E-1 Yellow 11 flown by Fw. Artur Beese of 9./JG 26 as it lays with its back broken after making a forced landing in the sand dunes near Calais on 24 August following air combat over England. The holes behind the canopy indicate bullet entry points but the pilot was protected by his armoured headrest. Of interest in the photograph (ABOVE) is the red outline and number of the 87 octane triangle. One possible explanation for this unusual variation is that towards the end of August, JG 26 had begun to receive some Bf 109 E-1N aircraft powered with the DB 601N engine which required 96 octane C-5 fuel. Perhaps the non-standard colours were intended to help avoid refuelling errors.

## August-September 1940



ABOVE AND BELOW: A mass take-off by the 5. Staffel of JG 53, almost certainly from Guernsey. The leading aircraft with the red ring (ABOVE) is 'Grey 10', and may very well be that of Uffz. Hans Wemhöfer who was shot down during a bomber escort mission on 18 August. After the bombers had completed their mission, Wemhöfer's 'Grey 10' was attacked at 18,000 feet and the pilot baled out, wounded. On the same mission, another Bf 109 coded 'Grey 9' and flown by Fw. Heinz Plattenschmidt was shot down by a Spitfire in similar circumstances. The 5. Staffel is reported to have used grey numbers instead of the more usual black throughout the Summer of 1940. Note that not all of the aircraft carry the red ring around their cowlings and two are fitted with rear-view mirrors.





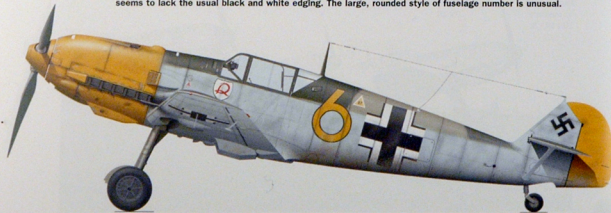
## August-September 1940



TOP AND ABOVE: Bf 109 Es of the I and III. Gruppen of JG 2 seen prior to take-off from Cherbourg-West (Quercyville) in the latter part of August 1940. In the photograph (ABOVE LEFT) the aircraft in the foreground, 'Yellow 5', appears to carry an upper surface scheme of 02/71 with a heavily applied fuselage mottle in the fashion of the unit. Most - but not all - aircraft have the now commonly seen coloured rudders and cowlings, though some are white and others yellow. The Bf 109 far right (ABOVE LEFT) has a yellow cowling and rudder yet still wears its four letter Stammkennzeichen. Note also the unusual style of number applied to 'Yellow 6' (ABOVE RIGHT).

#### Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of I./JG 2 based at Cherbourg-West, Summer 1940.

Bf 109 E-3 or E-4, 'Yellow 6' of I./JG 2, seen at Cherbourg-West in the Summer of 1940. This aircraft was finished in a high demarcation 02/71 finish with a very light mottle of 02 on the fuselage sides and fin. The now familiar areas of yellow paint applied to the cowling and rudder were intended to assist rapid air-to-air identification of friendly aircraft. The fuselage Balkenkreuz was of standard proportions, but the Hakenkreuz seems to lack the usual black and white edging. The large, rounded style of fuselage number is unusual.



## August-September 1940

RIGHT: Bf 109 Es of 3./JG 2 under Hptm. Henning Strimpell in formation over France during the Summer of 1940. Note that the Staffikapitän flies in front and slightly higher than the rest of the formation, his back covered by the whole Staffel. Once in combat, the formation would split into Rotten (pairs), each consisting of a Rotenführer in the lead, with his wingman, or Kettenhund, protecting his rear.



LEFT: This photograph illustrates the uneven retraction cycle of the main undercarriage of a Bf 109 E-4 of JG 2 as it takes off from Cherbourg-Théville during mid-August.



RIGHT: Oblt. Karl Heinz Leemann of I./JG 52 describes an aerial encounter to Oblt. Robert Golbel and interested ground crew at Calais, late August 1940.

## August-September 1940

'Black 5' of I./JG 52 at Calais during mid-August, with Obdt. Helmut Bennewmann on the wing and members of his ground crew.

Although this aircraft is fitted with the earlier style of canopy, the pilot's back and head armour is of the type usually associated with the later, heavier framed canopy. A rearview mirror is fitted to the windscreen framework, though not all pilots favoured this refinement as they found the view limited and they were tempted to look around less.



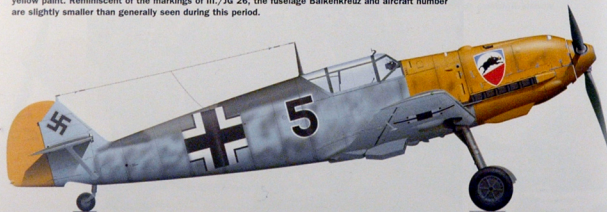
BELOW: Bf 109 Es of I./JG 52 prepare for their take-off run at Calais in August. The aircraft in the foreground, 'Black 5', is that of Helmut Bennewmann.



Emblem of I./JG 52.

### Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 flown by Obdt. Helmut Bennewmann of I./JG 52.

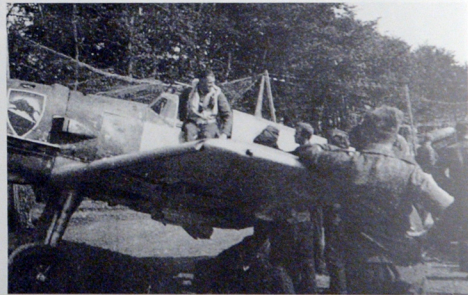
The Bf 109 E-3 'Black 5' flown by Obdt. Helmut Bennewmann of I./JG 52 finished in an upper camouflage scheme of 02/71. The sides of the fuselage were mottled with what is believed to be 02 and the yellow paint of the cowlings has been extended rearwards to the base of the windscreen and as far down as the top of the wing root fairing. The I. Gruppe 'Running Bear' emblem which was carried on both sides of the cowlings appears either to have been masked off very carefully or re-applied over the yellow paint. Reminiscent of the markings of III./JG 26, the fuselage Balkenkreuz and aircraft number are slightly smaller than generally seen during this period.



## August-September 1940



ABOVE: Bf 109 Es of I./JG 52 at Calais, probably mid-August 1940. The aircraft taxiing in the foreground is Obdt. Helmut Bennewmann's 'Black 5' which has the entire nose back to the windscreen painted yellow.

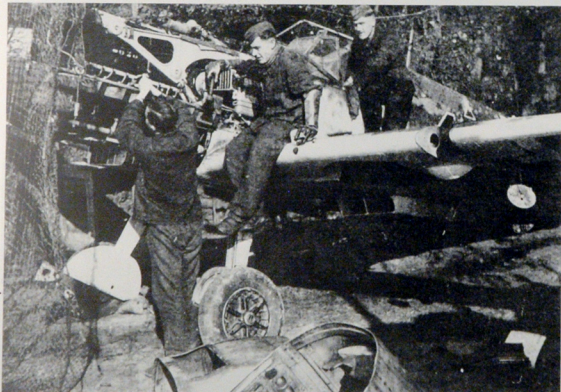


RIGHT: Obdt. Helmut Bennewmann exits from his 'Black 5' at Calais after returning from a successful mission over England during mid-August.



## August-September 1940

**THIS PAGE AND  
OVERLEAF:** This series of photographs shows the 'Black Men of 2 JG 52' - so called because of their black clothing - with their charges at Calais during mid to late August. Typical of this period, are the yellow cowling and spinners.



Grossadmiral Erich Raeder (second left) and Adolf Hitler at a naval ceremony. Raeder was not confident that the German Navy could support 'Sealion' and expressed his doubts to the Führer.

## Was the Threat of Sealion Real?

"Hitler spoke to me on the occasion of my first high decoration, and he said, 'I don't like the war against England. I am forced to fight, but I don't like it.'"

*Recollection of the then Major Adolf Galland when Hitler presented him with the Knight's Cross.*

Although in Britain there seemed little doubt that, once the Luftwaffe had destroyed Fighter Command, an invasion was inevitable, in fact Hitler had no intention of launching Operation Sealion. On 13 August, Grossadmiral Erich Raeder visited Hitler to warn him that such an operation was not to be undertaken lightly as the German Navy was not strong enough to support an invasion. Hitler agreed, since although he admired the British and felt that he had been forced against his will into a conflict he was now unable to conclude peacefully, he realised too that an invasion would be an extremely risky operation. Instead, he wanted to wait and see whether bombing alone would finally force the British to agree to peace talks, reasoning that if the Royal Air Force was defeated as intended, Britain would be so weakened that the mere threat of invasion should be sufficient to compel the British government to sue for peace. Most significantly, however, Hitler's thoughts had already turned to the East. His Intelligence organisations had reported that the Russians had begun a huge rearmament effort and, to Hitler, this was evidence that the Soviet Union - always his prime ideological enemy - was clearly planning to attack Germany. In that case, an invasion of Britain could put at risk the military forces he might later require in a battle with Russia.

Göring, too, had already noticed Hitler's reluctance to sanction an invasion. He did not believe it would be carried out and preferred to share Hitler's belief that an intensified aerial bombardment of London would be sufficient to bring about a decisive result and render Sealion unnecessary. When the Luftwaffe inadvertently bombed central London on the night of 24/25 August, Bomber Command retaliated the following night by bombing Berlin, but even so, Hitler at first refused to permit unrestricted air warfare against London. Only on 4 September, after the RAF had bombed Berlin again on two further nights, did Hitler publicly announce that a new aerial offensive was to be mounted against London, though once again, and despite the wishes of his strategic advisers, he ruled that the saturation bombing of residential areas was forbidden.

The new aerial offensive was to be personally directed by Reichsmarschall Göring who established his headquarters on the Channel coast for this purpose. It opened on 7 September with the Luftwaffe bombing the dockland area in London's East End. Surely, Hitler reasoned, this massive attack, combined with the existing blockade, would have a far-reaching effect on the inhabitants of London and would finally force the British Government to sue for peace, especially if backed up with the threat of imminent invasion. Thus, in order to preserve the impression that invasion was still a real possibility, Hitler did not immediately order the outright cancellation of Sealion and, to bring increased pressure on the British Government, there was to be no let-up in the Luftwaffe's attacks.



ABOVE: Partially hidden by branches, a Bf 109 E of 1./JG 51 and its nascent pilot wait at readiness, late August. Just visible under the lower edge of the windscreens is the 'Kittelhäuter' mountain goat emblem of 1./JG 51.

aborted their attacks. Then, at about 16.00 hrs, Luftwaffe 3 dispatched a first daylight attack, sending some 50 He 111s with an escort of 100-plus Bf 109s and Bf 110s to attack Portsmouth. Confronted by determined opposition, only a few of the bombers came anywhere near their target and only bombed the outskirts of the city causing little damage. Nevertheless, the defensive battles of the day cost the RAF a further 28 fighters lost.

No major German attacks materialised on 27 August, but in the late afternoon, 51 He 111s accompanied by more than 200 Bf 109s from JG 2, JG 27 and JG 53, together with 66 Bf 110s, attacked Portsmouth Harbour. During this operation, *Oblt.* Helmut Wick of 1./JG 2 claimed his 21st and 22nd victories, a Hurricane and a Spitfire, and 1./JG 53 claimed four Spitfires, two of these apparently being shot down by *Hptm.* Hans-Karl Mayer, *Staffelkapitän* of 1. *Staffel*, bringing his score to nineteen. Within a week, Mayer - a promising officer who had received rapid promotion and had earlier fought with the Condor Legion in Spain where he had won several decorations - would achieve his 20th victory, for which he was awarded the coveted *Ritterkreuz*.

On the morning of the 28th, the *Luftwaffe* again attacked in three separate phases. First, a number of Bf 109s carried out a *freie Jagd* fighter sweep over Kent. Then, at 08.30 hrs, a heavily escorted bomber formation crossed the English coast and split up into two formations so that as He 111 bombers of KG 53, escorted by *Stab*, I, and III./JG 26 headed for Rochford airfield, the Do 17s of KG 3 escorted by I, and III./JG 53 made their way towards Eastchurch. Little damage was caused at Rochford, and although the airfield at Eastchurch was hit particularly hard, it remained operational.

A second attack was mounted shortly after midday when, in another attempt to knock out the airfield, the Do 17s of II, and III./JG 3 attacked Rochford. The escorting German fighters gave such a good account of themselves that the defending RAF fighters were unable to get through to the bombers in sufficient strength to prevent the airfield from being hit. Despite the number of bombs dropped, however, little damage was done and the airfield continued to remain serviceable. In the third attack, made

On 26 August, *Luftwaffe* activity over Britain took the form of three major attacks. The first targeted the airfields at Biggin Hill and Kenley but was dispersed by strong opposition from the defending fighters, leaving the retreating bombers to drop their bombs on any worthwhile target as they crossed the coast. The second attack took place shortly after 13.00 hrs when approximately 80 bombers with fighter escort headed towards Essex. As it approached the coast, this force split into two formations and made for the airfields at Debden, Hornchurch and North Weald. But harried by the defending fighters and with their

own fighter escorts low on fuel, both formations were forced to abort. Luftwaffe 3 dispatched a first daylight attack, sending some 50 He 111s with an escort of 100-plus Bf 109s and Bf 110s to attack Portsmouth. Confronted by determined opposition, only a few of the bombers came anywhere near their target and only bombed the outskirts of the city causing little damage. Nevertheless, the defensive battles of the day cost the RAF a further 28 fighters lost.

BELOW: The Abschußstafel, or Victory List, of III./JG 2 showing the claims up to 26 August. Among the names of future famous *Ritterkreuzträger* are *Krich* Leie, Alexander von Winterfeldt, Bruno Stolle and Kurt Golisch.

## 1. Jagdgeschwader "Richtshofen Nr. 2" Abschußstafel

Nummer	Name	Abteilung	Waffen	Flugzeug	Tag	Ort	Art
1	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
2	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
3	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
4	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
5	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
6	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
7	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
8	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
9	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
10	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
11	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
12	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
13	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
14	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
15	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
16	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
17	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
18	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
19	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
20	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
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24	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
25	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
26	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
27	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
28	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
29	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
30	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
31	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
32	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
33	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
34	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
35	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
36	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
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38	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
39	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
40	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
41	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
42	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
43	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
44	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
45	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
46	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
47	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
48	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
49	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
50	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
51	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
52	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
53	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
54	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
55	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
56	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
57	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
58	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
59	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
60	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
61	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
62	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
63	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
64	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
65	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
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69	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
70	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
71	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
72	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
73	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
74	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
75	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
76	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
77	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
78	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
79	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
80	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
81	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
82	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
83	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
84	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
85	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
86	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
87	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
88	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
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90	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
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93	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
94	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
95	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
96	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
97	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
98	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
99	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen
100	Leie	III./JG 2	He 111	He 111	26.8.40	Portsmouth	Abgeschossen



LEFT: *Pw* Alfons Bacher, seated in his Bf 109 E-1, coded 'Red 2' at Cosquelles, near Calais, in August 1940. Bacher had earlier spent five months flying He 45 reconnaissance missions in Spain during the Civil War and had received the Spanish Cross. On 26 August, soon after this photograph was taken, Bacher took off with six other aircraft of 5./JG 52 on a *freie Jagd* patrol but was in the cockpit by a Spitfire which attacked out of the sun. He made a good forced landing on Sandwich Golf Club and was taken prisoner. As well as Bacher, three more 5. *Staffel* pilots were killed or captured on 26 August.

RIGHT: A reminder of the high rate of attrition experienced by the *Jagd* *Luftwaffe* during the Battle of Britain. By the middle of September, all six of these 1./JG 52 pilots, seen here enjoying a refreshing glass of grapes after a mission over England, had been lost. From the left are: *Uffz.* Lothar Hartlieb, *Ogr* Wladislaw Malecki, *Lt* Hans Berthel, *Uffz.* Peter Weber, *Pw* Alfons Bacher and *Uffz.* Karl Heinz Bokel. On 26 August, four of these pilots did not return. Hartlieb crashing into the Channel, his body being washed ashore on 15 September, and Malecki, Bacher and Bokel becoming *Pw*s. On 31 August, Weber was badly wounded and died a few days later. Berthel, then the *Gruppen* *Adjutant* of 1./JG 52, became a *Pw* on 15 September.



ABOVE: *Oblt.* Hans Philipp's 'White 1' clearly showing the sprayed cross-hatch finish used to tone down the blue fuselage sides.

MIDDLE RIGHT: Philipp claimed his first victory while with 1./JG 76 in Poland and seven more during the Western campaign. Here, all eight victories maybe seen on his aircraft's rudder. By 22 October 1940, Philipp's total had risen to 20 victories, for which he was awarded the *Ritterkreuz*, and by the end of the year his score had risen to 23.

RIGHT: Philipp seen here with *Oblt.* Werner Pichon-Kalau von Hofer, left, became *Staffelkapitän* of the 4./JG 54 on 26 August while based at Campagne.





## August-September 1940

during the mid-afternoon, large formations of Bf 109s and Bf 110s carried out *freie Jagd* sweeps over Kent and the Thames Estuary, resulting in a fierce fighter versus fighter battle above the Canterbury, Dungeness and Margate area. This was exactly the type of battle of attrition which the *Luftwaffe* sought and which the commander of 11 Group, Air Vice Marshal Keith Park, was anxious to avoid. In all, the day's fighting resulted in the loss of 21 RAF fighters lost or damaged against the loss of 16 Bf 109s.

Despite relatively good weather on the 29th, it was not until around mid-afternoon that the *Luftwaffe* put in an appearance in strength over Britain. At about 15.00 hrs, a force of some 500 Bf 109s from JG 3, JG 26, JG 51, JG 52 and JG 54 and the Bf 110s from ZG 26 and ZG 76 approached the Sussex coast escorting a small formation of Do 17s and He 111s. Again using large numbers of its fighters, the *Luftwaffe* was attempting to lure the defending RAF fighters up into combat. In the event, the RAF was generally heeding Park's orders to avoid the potentially high attrition rate that would necessarily accompany such fighter versus fighter engagements and did not rise to the bait in any great strength. Shortly after 18.00 hrs, in another attempt to bring the British fighters to battle, a series of *freie Jagd* fighter sweeps was carried out over the Kent coast, while other Bf 109s strafed the gun-sites around Dover and fought a brief battle with defending fighters from 85 and 501 Sqns. At the end of the day, the *Jagdflieger* had lost eight fighters in combat, whereas RAF losses amounted to six Hurricanes and three Spitfires.



*Now I was about 200 yards behind the Tommy. Steady does it - wait. The range was much too far. I crept slowly nearer till I was only a hundred yards away, and the Spit's wings filled my reflector sight. Suddenly the Tommy opened fire and the Me in front of him went into a dive. I too had pressed the firing button after previously aiming carefully. I was only in a gentle turn as I did so. The Spit at once caught fire and with a long grey plume of smoke dived down vertically into the sea.*

Lt. Max Hellmuth Ostermann (pictured left) of III./JG 54 describing his first victory on 31 August 1940.

**RIGHT:** Eight Gruppen of Bf 110 heavy escort fighters were committed to the Battle of Britain but the type was extremely vulnerable to fighter attack and prohibitive losses resulted in the Bf 110 itself requiring fighter escort. This Bf 110G-4, coded 'U8+AL', would normally have been flown by the Staffelführer of 3./ZG 26, Oßb. Ulrich Freiber von Graevenburg, and carries the 'Ringelitz' emblem of I. Gruppe on its nose. On 30 August, this aircraft was attacked and damaged by RAF fighters and is seen here after crash-landing on the beach at Cap Gris-Nez.



## August-September 1940



**LEFT:** When bombers were lost, or returned to France as seriously damaged as this downed He 111, Göring saw this as a failure on the part of the *Jagdflieger* to provide adequate protection.

On 30 August, the first major attack of the day did not get under way until around 11.00 hrs. Preceded by a large *freie Jagd*, a formation of approximately 70 Do 17s and He 111s, escorted by some 90 Bf 109 and Bf 110 fighters, crossed the south-east coast and headed for the airfields around London. They were immediately engaged by the Hurricanes of 85 and 151 Sqns and, disrupted by this attack, the formation broke up into a confused number of small battles that ranged over most of Kent and Surrey. By this time, all the defending 11 Group fighters were airborne, prompting Park to ask 12 Group to send its fighters to protect his airfields at Biggin Hill and Kenley. This 12 Group did, but a group of 20-plus Ju 88s managed to evade the fighters protecting Biggin Hill which, although attacked successfully, was not critically damaged.

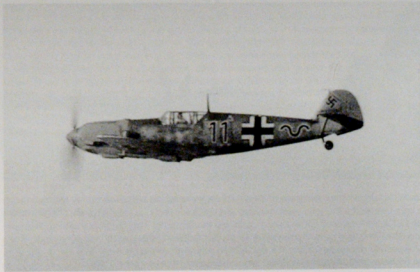
*Shown up clearly by the sun, and stretching fore and aft as far as the eye could see were rows of '109s riding above the haze, each row flying in line-astern and well spaced out - all of them heading south-south-east. It was a fantastic sight.*

Sqn/Ldr. Tom Gleave of 253 Squadron commenting on the fighter escort for one of the morning's attacks of 30 August 1940

At around 13.00 hrs and before many formations had begun to return from their first attacks, the afternoon phase opened with heavily escorted formations crossing the coast between Dover and Dungeness before spitting up to head for their targets of Biggin Hill, Kenley, Shoreham and Tangmere. During this attack the main power supply for seven RDF stations failed, leaving the south-east coast without any radar protection for a critical period of time. No sooner were these raids over than they were followed by a third series of attacks that struck at the airfields of Biggin Hill, Detling, Kenley and North Weald as well as Hawker Aviation at Slough, the Spitfire and Hurricane repair centres at Oxford and the Vauxhall works at Luton. Although the raid intended for Oxford was turned back, Luton and the airfields, including those at Radlett and Hatfield, would be less fortunate. Approximately 30 bombers penetrated to Luton and caused severe damage and a small group of bombers hit Detling airfield, putting it out of action for sixteen hours. At about 18.00 hrs, a surprise low-level attack against Biggin Hill by the Bf 110 *Jabos* of *Erprobungsgruppe* 210 severely damaged the airfield and caused a number of casualties. It also cut the station's communications and power links with the result that temporary control of the Biggin Hill sector was taken over by Hornchurch.

Throughout this day, regarded by many as the hardest fought of the whole Battle, the intensity of the aerial battles had cost the *Jagdflieger* 12 fighters lost as a result of combat, but the RAF had lost 21. *Luftwaffe* fighter pilot casualties for the day amounted to three killed and five taken prisoner, whereas seven British pilots were killed.

As a prelude to the attacks scheduled for the 31st, Bf 109s ranged over the coastal areas shooting down large numbers of barrage balloons. They were followed shortly after 08.00 hrs by the first major raid of the day when a force of Do 17s from KG 2 with heavy fighter escort fought their way towards Debden and North Weald. A third wave, also from KG 2, made for Duxford but was driven off by the combined efforts of fighters and the airfield's defences. Within the hour, yet another raid was making for Eastchurch while Bf 109s and 110s were carrying out strafing attacks on other airfields including West Malling and Detling.



Once - I think it was 31 August 1940 - I was in a flight with four Hurricanes over Dover. I was back over the Channel when I saw another Hurricane coming from Calais, trailing smoke, obviously in a bad way. I flew up alongside him and escorted him all the way to England and then waved goodbye. A few weeks later the same thing happened to me. That would never have happened in Russia - never!

Comment by Erich Rudorffer, then a Feldwebel with 2./JG 2.

At around 13.00 hrs, another raid commenced when two large and heavily escorted formations, which included elements of *Eprobungsgruppe* 210, fought their way through the defences to strike yet again at Fighter Command's airfields. In this attack, He 111 bombers hit Biggin Hill and *Eprobungsgruppe* 210 attacked Croydon, while a third group, consisting of Do 17s from KG 3 with an escort from JG 77, detached itself and swung north to attack Hornchurch. Just as the Dorniers arrived over Hornchurch, their first bombs caught three Spitfires of 54 Sqn as they began their take-off runs, destroying two and severely damaging the other. Surprisingly, the three pilots involved all survived, albeit with various levels of injuries. Then, in the fourth raid of the day, shortly after 17.30 hrs, while BF 109s roamed on *freie Jagd* sweeps to the outskirts of London, high flying raiders attacked Hornchurch and caused severe damage at Biggin Hill.

TOP AND RIGHT: Representative of the BF 109 E in the Battle of Britain, these aircraft are seen in typical camouflage and markings for the period, with the fuselage sides mottled to tone down the earlier blue yet, paradoxically, with large areas of yellow added as special identification markings to the nose, wingtips and rudder behind the fuselage *Hakenkreuz* in the photograph above is the way line symbol used to indicate the aircraft belonged to the III. Gruppe within its Geschwader.



Thus ended a day in which the Luftwaffe inflicted the highest losses of the Battle on the RAF, with 34 of Fighter Command's aircraft destroyed and five pilots killed. Across the Channel, Jagdwaffe losses for the 31st totalled 21 fighters lost and five damaged while pilot casualties totalled 16; four killed and 12 taken prisoner. Particularly hard hit was the newly arrived I./JG 77 which, because of the heavy demand for escort fighters, had earlier transferred from the Friesian Islands, where it had been engaged in coastal defence duties, and arrived at Marquise on the Channel Front on 25 August. The I. Gruppe lost seven aircraft and six pilots, and among the five pilots taken prisoner were two *Staffelkapitän*: *Obst.* Hans-Jürgen Ehrig of 1. *Staffel* who had flown in Spain, Poland and France and had been awarded the Iron Cross First Class, and *Obst.* Ekkehard Priebe of 2. *Staffel*.

## "The Battle of Britain was terrible..."

UJO DAHMER, JG 26

After the campaign in France, our unit was sent to Cognac, not far from Bordeaux. Actually, my quarters were in the Martel's villa where, of course, we had plenty of their well-known high-quality brandy. In Cognac, we taught new pilots arriving as replacements from the *Fliegerschule* and so, for a while, I was employed as a fighter-instructor.

During the fighting in France and Belgium, we had lost our *Gruppenkommandeur* and, while we were awaiting a replacement, *Obst.* Ebbshausen, a *Staffelkapitän*, temporarily took over the *Gruppe*. We received our new *Gruppenkommandeur*, *Hptm.* Erich Noack, at the end of May. We disliked him from the moment he arrived. He was highly pretentious, and although he had no combat experience, he tried to lecture us on tactics.

The *Staffel*, 5./JG 26 then went to Cap Gris-Nez for the Battle of Britain. When Noack finally made his first real war flight, we became involved in a dogfight with British pilots and Noack became disorientated. He called the pilots of his *Staffel* *schwärm* and ordered them to find him and lead him back to the airfield. What else could they do? But then, shortly before he landed, he did something wrong during his final approach and crashed about 100 metres from the airfield. And I must say that we did not miss him in the slightest!

The Battle of Britain was terrible and we lost so many people. Anyone whose aircraft was hit while they were across the other side of Channel, even if the damage was only minor, was unable to reach the French coast and was taken prisoner. On one occasion the *Gruppe* took off on a bomber escort mission with about 20 BF 109s and only five came back! Apart from myself, and two pilots who left the unit for health reasons, not a single one of my *Staffel*'s original twelve pilots survived.

Once I had survived the first battles, I flew with some pilots who, while perhaps not as good as the original cadre of *Staffel* pilots, were excellent in comparison with those who came later. And I had more than my usual share of luck, too, although this alone was not sufficient to guarantee survival and had to be used carefully. Because I had learned aerobatics, I was able to escape dangerous situations with some murderous manoeuvres which gave the impression I had been hit and this saved my life on many occasions.

I flew 75 sorties to London and shot down about 10 Spitfires and Hurricanes in spite of the fact I was only a wingman. In a formation, the wingman who flew at the end or on the flank was normally the first to be attacked. When we saw Spitfires attacking us, the radio would be full of such orders as *'Achtung! Indianer! Break right' or 'Break left'* but I kept to the previous course, as if I had not heard anything. Then I would wait until the first bursts were fired in my direction and, after a few seconds, quickly turn towards my opponent and pass under him at such a high speed that he was unable to aim at me. I then turned again and positioned myself so that I could shoot at him from behind. I applied these tactics instead of following the radioed order right from the earliest battles, and while this gave me no more than a 50/50 chance of surviving, I found that with experience I was able to judge my opponent's ability. In fact, when I was attacked, I even had time to observe his flying skills and estimate when would be the best moment for me to react. One could easily judge whether or not one's opponent was a good pilot, regardless of his gunnery skills. However, gunnery was of secondary importance: you first needed to be able to bring your aircraft into a good firing position, then you would not miss the target. By employing these tactics I was hit just once, and then only slightly.

We were the high-altitude *Gruppe* of JG 26 and our aircraft had special engines which allowed us to reach 12,000 metres. My *Staffel* was often used as top cover so it was very rare for us to be able to claim anything. We flew at 8,000 to 10,000 metres at least, while the rest of the unit flew between 3,000 to 6,000 metres.

Galland was another pilot we found very pretentious. He made himself a 'star' but, in fact, he was not as exceptional as has often been described. He used an aircraft especially equipped for flying at high altitude, the same as flown by our *Staffel*, the *Höhenstaffel*. However, the other pilots in his *Geschwaderstab* had no such aircraft so that when he sighted a possible target and accelerated towards it, they were unable to keep up with him. Galland, therefore, was always the first to reach the enemy and the first to be presented with an opportunity to shoot him down. None of Galland's *Rotten- or Schwarmflieger* had this same advantage. They remained behind him and protected his back.

After the hectic months of the Battle of Britain, the remnants of our *Staffel* were called back to Germany for a rest and were sent to St Anton for a holiday in the snow. Later, I was posted to JG 5 where officers in my *Staffel* who had hardly any claims could barely believe that a mere *Unteroffizier* was more successful than they were.





While not quite as intensive as the previous attacks, the morning of 1 September saw Kesselring's bombers return to maintain their pressure on the airfields. Shortly before 11.00 hrs, an immense formation of heavily escorted bombers approached the coast where they split into four separate formations, some of which penetrated as far as Biggin Hill, Gravesend, Hornchurch, Kenley and North Weald. Just after 13.00 hrs, a second, similar operation was mounted when a large formation crossed the coast followed shortly by another formation some 80 strong, their objectives being Biggin Hill and Kenley. In the resulting attack, the additional damage to Biggin Hill led to the operations room being temporarily removed to commercial premises some quarter of a mile distant. At about 15.30 hrs, a third attack materialised and although some bombs were dropped on the Dunkirk RDF station, the bulk of the formation was fighters on a *freie Jagd* which attempted to lure the British fighters into combat by strafing the airfields at Hawkinge and Lympne. In the battles of the 1st, the *Jagdwaiffe* lost five fighters with two pilots killed and three taken prisoner. One of the prisoners was the *Staffelkapitän* of 5./JG 54, *Oblt.* Anton Stangl, who collided with another Bf 109 during a bomber escort mission during the morning raid and baled out. The other pilot's parachute did not open.

Throughout 2 September, the *Luftwaffe* launched almost 1,000 sorties in five separate raids in a major effort to complete the destruction of airfields in Essex, Kent and Middlesex. Generally flying in formations of only 30-40 bombers but with a heavy fighter escort, the formations were intercepted and broken up before they could create serious damage. Shortly after 17.00 hrs one of the largest dogfights of the day occurred when some 70 Hurricanes and Spitfires took on approximately 160 Bf 109s in a fierce battle which was fought above the Dover-Dungeness area. The battle became even more threatening to friend and foe alike when the Dover anti-aircraft defences became involved as an enthusiastic participant! At the end of the day's actions the *Jagdwaiffe* had lost 17 Bf 109s, two of which collided during an operational patrol off Calais, killing both pilots. Nine aircraft received various levels of damage resulting in two being written-off. Six pilots were lost and one was wounded while a further seven were taken prisoner, one of whom, *Lt.* Werner Kluge of 9./JG 2 would later die from injuries received from bailing out at too low an altitude. Another of the pilots lost on the 2nd, *Oblt.* Ekkehard Schelcher, *Gruppenstab* officer of JG 54, would lie in the wreckage of his fighter for 37 years until his crash site was investigated in 1977 and his remains discovered. He was later interred at the *Soldatenfriedhof* at Cannock Chase with full military honours.

The morning of 3 September saw the airfield attacks switched from those in Kent to the Essex airfields north of the River Thames. Debden, Hornchurch and North Weald all came under attack in an attempt to push British fighter opposition farther away from the coast. North Weald was hit the hardest but was able to remain operational by day. It was during the raids of the 3rd that the *Luftwaffe* experimented with a change in the composition of its formations, brought about by concerns over the

RIGHT: This photograph is believed to show *Uffz.* Wilhelm Morgenstern's Bf 109 E-1 'White 9', W/Nr 6536, of 4./JG 27 at Flennes on 5 September, following a collision with *Oblt.* Emmerich Fluder's 'Black 15' of 5./JG 27. Morgenstern was seriously injured in this incident.



RIGHT: This Bf 109 of 5./JG 54 was damaged by enemy action during mid-August and is seen here at Campagne after being repaired. In this photograph, armourers are synchronising the fuselage mounted MG 17 machine-guns before returning the machine to service.



continuing losses to its *Kampfgeschwader*. Previously, they and their escorts had approached their targets in a stepped formation, but this was now replaced temporarily by a new arrangement in which fighters and bombers flew at the same level as well as in mixed bomber/fighter formations. In the event, neither proved to be satisfactory and after a few days the formations would revert to the earlier arrangement. Total *Jagdwaiffe* losses for the day totalled one Bf 109 lost, plus one damaged, with a further three written off; one each from 4. and 5. *Staffeln* of JG 27 after colliding while landing at Flennes, and the third from 9./JG 51 as a result of combat damage. Pilot casualties for the day amounted to one killed and two wounded. Two Bf 109s of LG 2 also received damage on this day, one in a landing accident while returning from a sortie while the other was on a non-operational flight.



LEFT: *Lt.* Helmut Benneemann, the *Gruppenadjutant* of 1./JG 52, returns to Coquebec after a sortie, early September 1940.

On 4 September, in accordance with orders issued four days previously, certain aircraft factories were singled out for attack including the Short Bros. factory at Rochester and the Hawker aircraft factory at Brooklands airfield, near Weybridge. The latter, an important target where half the total output of Hurricanes was produced, was to be attacked by crews from *Eprobungsgruppe* 210. Taking off soon after midday from their forward airfield at Calais-Marck, the formation was led by the new *Gruppenkommandeur*, *Hptm.* Hans von Boltenstern, escort being provided by the *Bf* 110s of *IV./Lehrgeschwader* 1. Even before reaching the English coast, von Boltenstern's aircraft was seen to dive into the sea as he attempted to avoid interception by RAF fighters, but the rest of *Exp.Gr.* 210 reached the target. They attacked, however, not the Hawker factory but the Vickers-Supermarine factory on the other side of the airfield, causing serious damage. On this site, some bombs hit the machine shop and the erecting shop, while more were dropped near aircraft dispersed round the aerodrome. Casualties amounted to 88 killed and about 500 injured, a toll which would have been longer had not many of the employees been away at their lunch break. Production was halted for some four days while the bomb damage was cleared away. The formation lost four escort *Bf* 110s from *IV./LG* 1 in this attack. In other actions of the day, the *Jagdwaflfe* lost six fighters with two damaged and four pilots killed plus one wounded. This was *Ritterkreuzträger Hptm.* Wilhelm Bathasar, the *Gruppenkommandeur* of *III./JG* 3, wounded in an encounter with Spitfires of 222 *Sqn* near Canterbury at around 13.00 hrs.

As on 4 September, the raids on the 5th were in the form of two major attacks, both of which split up after crossing the coast in order to confuse the defences. The morning raids focused their attention on the airfields at Biggin Hill, Croydon, Eastchurch, Lympne and North Weald while those of the afternoon concentrated on Biggin Hill, Detling and Thameshaven, dispersing shortly after 14.00 hrs under heavy fighter cover. Both attacks were bitterly contested by the defending fighters, resulting in numerous dogfights above southern England throughout the day which cost the *Jagdwaflfe* 16 fighters. Among the German pilots captured was the *Gruppenadjutant* of *II./JG* 3, *Obst.* Franz von Werra, later to become famous as 'The One that Got Away' after escaping from Canada and making his way to the then neutral USA. Also captured on the 5th was *Lt.* Heinz Schnabel of *I./JG* 3 who would later become involved in a bold escape attempt with a former *He* 111 pilot from *JG* 27.

On 6 September, three major attacks developed during the day. In the first two, heavily escorted formations targeted five of the sector airfields around London but the RAF largely broke up the German formations and damage to the airfields was negligible. The third raid, against the fuel storage farms on the banks of the Thames Estuary, was more successful and serious fires were started. The fighting



*LEFT:* A Schwann of yellow nosed *Bf* 109 Es from *JG* 2 *Bf* north along the coast of France near Cap Gris-Nez. Most *Luftwaflfe* aircraft, and especially pilots of single-engine aircraft, greatly disliked flying over the Channel.



*LEFT:* An unidentified pilot of *II./JG* 26 exiting his *Bf* 109 E at Marquise, believed to have been photographed on 6 September, as with *Walter Schneider's* aircraft, this also carries the *Heil Hitler* emblem beneath the cockpit and is fitted with an additional armoured glass windshield.

between the opposing forces was hard fought and bitter and, as *Luftwaflfe* daylight operations drew to a close *Jagdwaflfe* losses stood at 13 with five damaged. Five pilots were killed, three were wounded and eight were prisoners of war including the *Gruppenkommandeur* of *III./JG* 27, *Hptm.* Joachim Schlichting. *LG* 2 lost two *Bf* 109s on operational sorties, both pilots being taken prisoner.

It was now becoming obvious just how incorrect was *Oberst* Schmid's intelligence report on the strength of the Royal Air Force. Despite repeated assurances that the RAF was almost finished, to *Luftwaflfe* aircrew it seemed that the British fighter defences were inexhaustible and that their incursions were being met with a determination and ferocity hitherto unknown. In the bomber *Geschwader*, crews described the British fighter attacks as 'furious'; one German crew had seen an aircraft in its formation rammed by a British fighter pilot and were considerably shaken and very impressed by this and the mettle of the British pilots. *Luftwaflfe* fighter pilots, too, were beginning to feel the heavy strain, sometimes carrying out five consecutive flights a day in *freie Jagd* fighter sweeps over England, while airframes and engines also suffered from these efforts.

But in its attacks of 6 September, the *Luftwaflfe* had struck hard and extreme pressure had been brought to bear on Fighter Command. Six of the seven sector airfields had suffered considerable damage, and five of the advanced airfields fared no better. Losses in aircraft exceeded production figures and strength was now down to a total of some 700 aircraft. Although taking longer than originally anticipated, mainly due to its own miscalculations, the *Luftwaflfe* was slowly gaining the upper hand. It now appeared that victory was within its grasp. Fighter Command was weakening.

In the period from 24 August to 6 September, a total of 295 RAF fighters were destroyed, but the loss of 103 pilots killed or missing and a further 128 withdrawn from combat with injuries, was far more serious. In particular, the loss of experienced pilots, particularly Squadron and Flight commanders, was a major concern since these were the men who bore the brunt of the fighting and their numbers were steadily decreasing. New pilots, with no battle experience, were lucky if they survived their first mission, while less experienced squadrons suffered such serious losses that they had to be withdrawn after just a few weeks.

Such mounting pilot losses, together with the continuous, damaging attacks against its airfields, were beginning to threaten Fighter Command's ability to continue as a defensive force. Unable to rotate its squadrons because it lacked adequately rested ones with which to replace them, Fighter Command's capability to continue to resist was slowly being eroded. With reserves at their lowest, and with casualties the equivalent of losing six squadrons a week, Dowding's forces were strained to their limit. But although they were as yet unaware of it, they were about to get the reprieve they so badly needed.



## August-September 1940

**BELOW:** Ground personnel discussing the twenty-eight Abschuss bars on the rudder of Werner Mölders' BF 109 E, 28 August 1940.



**LEFT:** Major Werner Mölders, the Kommodore of JG 51, was credited with exceptional eyesight and was usually the first pilot to see enemy aircraft. Due to his reputation, tactics and success, morale in JG 51 during the Battle was very high.

**RIGHT:** Lt. Hans-Marquart Christinnecke of 7./JG 26 claimed his first victory, a Spitfire, on 30th August 1940. Less than a week later, on 6 September, he was flying 'White 4' when he himself attacked by a fighter over Ashford. He made a forced landing and was taken prisoner, but first succeeded in setting fire to his aircraft, which completely burnt out.

**BELOW:** Oblt. Hans 'Assi' Hahn (not to be confused with Hans von Hahn) flew with the 'Richtshafen' Geschwader from the beginning of the war and was Staffelfkapitän of 4./JG 2 until October 1940. Hahn is seen here wearing his Ritterkreuz, awarded on 24 September 1940.



**RIGHT:** Major Wolfgang Schellmann (first left) pictured at the end of August with Werner Machold, centre, and Oblt. Hans 'Assi' Hahn, Staffelfkapitän of 4./JG 2. Schellmann was one of only a few pilots awarded the Spanish Cross in Gold with Diamonds.

## August-September 1940



**LEFT:** Helmut Wick's BF 109 E 'Yellow 2' photographed in late August at Beaumont-le-Roger. Although fitted with a heavier framed canopy, the supplemental armoured windscreen has yet to be installed. As with many other BF 109s of the period, the black borders of the Balkenkreuz have been increased to reduce the visibility of the white segments the rudder was painted with 22 Abschuss bars, the last two being achieved on 26 August 1940.



**Messerschmitt BF 109 E-4 flown by Oblt. Helmut Wick, Staffelfkapitän of 3./JG 2.** 'Yellow 2', the BF 109 E-4 of JG 2's Helmut Wick carried an upper camouflage of 02/71 with the 65 of the fuselage sides, fin and rudder covered in a heavily applied stipple of 71. On the port side of the fin, in the usual position, the Werk Nummer 5344 was still visible beneath the stipple. The black borders to the fuselage Balkenkreuz were broadened to reduce the visibility of the white areas and the JG 2 'Richtshafen' shields also carried a light overspray. However, no toning down or overspray has affected the blue and yellow 'Horrido' pennant on the cowlings. Twenty-two white Abschuss bars were carried on both sides of the rudder.



Emblem of 3./JG 2.



Helmut Wick's personal 'Kingfisher' badge.



Detail of port side view.



**RIGHT:** A posed photograph showing pilots of 3./JG 2 discussing the 22 victory bars on Oblt. Wick's aircraft. These 22 victories earned Wick the Ritterkreuz, awarded on 27 August. He would soon be one of the greatest aces of the Channel Front, becoming Kommandeur of 1./JG 2 on 10 September and in October, when only 25 years of age, Kommodore of JG 2.

## August-September 1940



'Tatzelwurm' emblem of 2./JG 3.

RIGHT: A photograph of a Luftwaffe mechanic posing with Ofw. Bernhard Lampskemper's aircraft, believed to be 'Black 8' as shown in the colour profile.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 2./JG 3 flown by Ofw. Bernhard Lampskemper.

'Black 8', the Bf 109 E-4 W.Nr. 5338 flown by Ofw. Bernhard Lampskemper of 2./JG 3. On 29 August 1940, this aircraft took off on a mid-afternoon freelance patrol and, with this aircraft flying some distance ahead of the other machines of the Staffel, had just crossed the English coast at a height of 22,000 feet, when it was attacked by Spitfires. The engine seized and Lampskemper glided down to a smooth crash-landing near the RDF station at Pevensey, barely damaging the aircraft and being captured unhurt despite being shot at from the ground by Bofors guns which badly damaged the undersurfaces when he had descended to 300 feet. The aircraft, Item 5 in A.I.1.(g) Crashed Enemy Aircraft Report No. 15 dated 31 August 1940, was described as having olive green on the uppersurfaces, but was probably finished in an 02/71 scheme and, as with other JG 3 aircraft of the period, the Blue 65 fuselage and fin sides would have carried a light mottling of 02 and 71. The wings, rudder and cowlings were painted yellow, the latter extending back to the windscreen as shown in the profile. The spinner was painted half white and half 70, with the extreme tip finished in red. The Staffel Tatzelwurm emblem appeared on both sides of the cowlings on a rectangular background of the original mottled finish, and was red with a thin black outline and yellow tongue.

RIGHT: Demonstrating a weakness that plagued the Bf 109 in all its variants, the undersurface of Ofw. Keller's 'Black 6' of 2./JG 5 has collapsed while taxiing on a rough section of the landing ground at Colombier. The application of a light colour, possibly the underside 65, can be seen along the leading edge of the wing and apart from the fuselage number, the aircraft is almost identical to Ofw. Lampskemper's 'Black 8' shown in the colour profile.



## August-September 1940

RIGHT: Condor Legion veteran Hptm. Otto 'Oschy' Bertram, Gruppenkommandeur of 1./JG 2 during the Battle of Britain, was awarded the Ritterkreuz in October 1940. Otto Bertram's two brothers both died in action over the Channel and, as last surviving son, German regulations permitted Otto Bertram to be withdrawn from combat flying. He subsequently occupied staff positions and led training units until the end of the war. Beneath Bertram's right breast pocket is the Spanish Cross in Gold with Swords and Diamonds. This was the highest grade of Spanish Cross and it was originally reserved for the three commanders of the Condor Legion - specific, von Richthofen and Volkmann. However, Hitler considered this his personal award and retained the prerogative of presenting it to combatants who, in his opinion, were especially deserving of it. Nevertheless, only 27 were awarded, most recipients being prominent Luftwaffe personalities, and included Wolfgang Scheilmann, Adolf Galland, Harro Harder, Günther Lützow, Werner Mölders and Walter Oesau.



The 'Bonzoo Dog' emblem of 1./JG 2 designed by Otto Bertram.



LEFT: 'White 10' of 1./JG 2 seen taxiing from its dispersal point at the beginning of September, just visible ahead of the intake fairing is the 1. Staffel 'Bonzoo Dog' emblem designed by Otto Bertram. The JG 2 'Bichtschoten' shield may also be seen, and the white areas of the fuselage cross have been overpainted to reduce their visibility. As this photograph clearly shows, the Bf 109 pilot was unable to see anything directly ahead, his forward vision being obscured by the engine. Collisions on the ground were commonplace unless aircraft were guided by ground crews' hand signals.

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 1./JG 2, late August 1940.

A Bf 109 E-4, 'White 10', of 1./JG 2 circa late August 1940 illustrating the usual application of yellow to the cowlings and rudder. The fuselage sides are not as heavily mottled as usually seen on many JG 2 aircraft, and the Balkenkreuz has been partially overpainted with one of the uppersurface colours to reduce its visibility.







**LEFT AND BELOW:** Two views of Fw. Ernst Arnold's Bf 109 E-1 "Yellow 12" of 3./JG 27. Clearly visible is the white scissor marking applied behind the cockpit. This aircraft was shot down on 30 August, possibly by P/O B.J.G. Garbury of 603 Sqn, and subsequently placed on display. When a Mr F. Heasley wanted to organize a display in Exeter to aid the Lord Mayor's Spitfire Fund Appeal, he requested an exhibit and the remains of Arnold's aircraft were delivered to him early one Sunday morning. Here, Mr. Heasley poses with his acquisition in September 1940.



Emblem of 1./JG 27



#### Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 of 3./JG 27 flown by Fw. Ernst Arnold.

Bf 109 E-1 "Yellow 12" of 3./JG 27. This aircraft was flown on 30 August by Fw. Ernst Arnold, who took off at 16.00 hrs as part of a freelance fighter patrol over England. In a surprise attack by fighters, the radiator of this aircraft was hit and Fw. Arnold forced landed at Westwood Court, two miles south of Faversham, Kent, at 16.45 hrs. The machine was finished in a high demarcation 70/71 upper surface camouflage with little or no mottling applied to the fuselage sides. The entire cowling and spinner were yellow with the 1./JG 27 emblem applied to both sides of the cowling. As seen on other aircraft of 3. Staffel, a pair of scissors and lower case 'r' applied in white just above the aircraft number. These are understood to represent a play on the name of a former Staffelführer, Ulrich Scherer.



Emblem of 3./JG 3



#### Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 flown by Oblt. Helmut Rau, Staffelführer of 3./JG 3.

Only some six weeks old when it forced landed on the sands at Shoeburyness on the evening of 31 August, Bf 109 E-4 Werk Nummer 1082, "Yellow 4", was flown by Oblt. Helmut Rau, the Staffelführer of 3./JG 3. Despite hazy weather conditions which made the prospect of a successful operation extremely doubtful, Oblt. Rau was nevertheless ordered to take part in a freie Jagd patrol to London, a city Rau knew well, having worked in a bank there before the war. After taking off at 16.30 hrs, the patrol was flying in two formations, each of eight aircraft, at 30,000 feet when they were attacked from the rear by British aircraft. As Oblt. Rau tried to climb higher in order to avoid the danger, he saw that his wingman had been shot down. Rau then dove to observe his falling wingman's aircraft and was himself hit, probably by a Spitfire of 603 Sqn flown by P/O 'Rasp' Berry. This aircraft then made a forced landing on the beach at Shoeburyness. Finished to an 02/71 upper pattern the sides of the fuselage were lightly mottled with what is believed to have been 71. The fuselage Balkenkreuz were of slightly smaller proportions than usually seen on JG 3 aircraft and the spinner was painted half white and half black or black-green 70 with the tip in the Staffel colour of yellow. The Tatzelwurm emblem, applied to the port side only of the cowling, was yellow with a thin black outline. Three black Abschuss bars were carried on the fin above the aircraft Werk Nummer representing two Curtiss fighters destroyed on 14.5.40 and one Morane on 30.5.40.

**RIGHT:** Oblt. Helmut Rau's "Yellow 4" attracts a huge crowd while on display in Helton, Lancashire. Although striped of most of its fabric areas, the aircraft still retains the three victory stripes on its tail.





Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 of 9./JG 26 flown by Oblt. Wilhelm Fronhöfer.

'Yellow 10' the Bf 109 E-3 of Oblt. Wilhelm Fronhöfer of 9./JG 26 which forced landed at Ulcombe during the early evening of 31 August. With an upper scheme of 70/71 it was finished in the commonly seen III./JG 26 high demarcation camouflage style with no discernible mottling on the sides of the fuselage, fin or rudder. In keeping with the other aircraft of this Gruppe, the Balkenkreuz, Gruppe bar and aircraft number were smaller than usually seen. The 9. Staffel Hollenband emblem and JG 26 'Schlageter' shield were carried on both sides of the fuselage beneath the cockpit. It is understood that the tip of the spinner was a lighter green than the remainder. The Werk Number on the fin is applied on a dark green rectangular background indicating that this aircraft was originally finished in a low-demarcation 70/71 camouflage scheme.

**BELOW:** On 31 August, JG 26 mounted various missions throughout the day and claimed 22 victories for the loss of five aircraft and pilots, the heaviest loss of pilots in a single day during the whole of the Battle of Britain. During a late afternoon mission the entire Geschwader took off to rendezvous with KG 76, which was to attack the RAF aerodrome at Hornchurch. As soon as the aircraft of III./JG 26 crossed the coast, they were attacked by RAF fighters and the aircraft of Oblt. Wilhelm Fronhöfer of Stab III./JG 26 was one of three pilots shot down. His aircraft, 'Yellow 10' forced landed at Jubilee Hall Farm, Ulcombe, where Fronhöfer was taken prisoner.



**LEFT AND FAR LEFT:** Two close-up views of the red griffin or 'Hollenband' carried by the aircraft of the 9. Staffel until early 1941 and the script '9' badge of JG 26, both showing slight variations. Note in the photo (**LEFT**) the darkened fuselage sides, which were only adopted by JG 26 much later in 1940 than other units.

**RIGHT:** The Bf 109 E-4, White 13 of Oblt. Hans Jürgen Erieg, the Staffkapitän of 1. JG 77, lies crumpled in a field at Gates Farm near Tentenden, Kent on the afternoon of 31 August. Damaged by fighters while over Hornchurch on an escort mission, Erieg attempted to return to France but, harried by F/Lt M.L. Robinson of 601 Sqn, he was forced to put his damaged aircraft down and was subsequently taken prisoner. 31 August was disastrous for JG 77 which, newly introduced to the Battle of Britain, lost five aircraft from 1. Staffel and one from 2. Staffel.



**BELOW:** Oblt. Hasso von Perthes poses beside Bf 109 E-4 WNr 1399 Brown 13 of 5/JG 2 at Mont Escovetz near Cambrai, 29 May 1940. Clearly visible attached to the fin and tailplane leading edges are the three antenna leads for the FuG-VII radio. On 31 August, despite still wearing a surgical boot fitted as a result of a recent missing accident, Oblt. von Perthes took off in Bf 109 E-7 WNr 5600 on a bomber escort sortie. Over Crowhurst, he was attacked by P/O M. Feric of 303 Sqn and baled out of his aircraft. At 18.45 hrs, Oblt. von Perthes landed at Hurst Green critically injured from numerous machine-gun bullet and other wounds, possibly from anti-aircraft fire. First admitted to a local hospital for immediate surgery, he was later transferred to the Royal Herbert Hospital in Woodwich but died on 14 September. It has been alleged that Oblt. von Perthes was shot and wounded while descending by parachute, but to date no factual evidence has been discovered to confirm this. His aircraft was the first Bf 109 E-7 to crash in Britain.

**BELOW:** Bf 109 E-4 WNr 1399 was severely damaged during an operational sortie over England on 31 August and was subsequently written off. The emblem of 5.(J)/JG 2, like several others of the period, included an umbrella as carried by the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, a habit the Germans found a source of some amusement. In an unreported letter found on one shot down PoW, the writer, alluding to a successful German invasion and a subsequent posting to Britain, mentioned that in the future he hoped to observe this phenomenon for himself. This comment caused an RAF Intelligence Officer dryly to mention in his report that, since this individual was now in England, he was presumably satisfied his wish had been granted!





## "It was the saddest moment of my career."

JOSEPH BÜRSCHIGENS, JG 26

I flew during the Battle of Britain with 7/JG 26. On 11 August 1940, my Bf 109 was attacked over England by a Spitfire from 74 Sqn which hit my fuselage and engine, but I managed to coax my aircraft back across the Channel and crash landed in a field near my base at Calters in France.

One of my *Katschmareks* at that time was a young *Unteroffizier* and *Fahnenjunker*, an officer cadet named Horst Liebeck. He was brave and ambitious and although an excellent pilot, he was shot down on 31 August. He baled out of his aircraft and landed by parachute at Stansted where he was captured unhurt and made a POW.

The terms "*Katschmarek*" and "*Rottenflieger*" incidentally were in use from very early on and referred to the tactical number two, or wingman, in the *Rotte* and remained unchanged for the rest of the war. The *Rottenführer* and his *Katschmarek* were an effective combat team and although the *Rotte* was based on leadership, personal understanding and flying qualities, it also involved *Kameradschaft*, something akin to friendship but much deeper. Developed through teamwork and a close dependency on one another in combat, *Kameradschaft* is a bond which lasts forever.

At about 13.30 hrs on 1 September 1940, the III. Gruppe of JG 26, the "*Schlageter*" *Geschwader*, was flying as escort for bombers which were to attack an airfield near London. We were flying at about 5,000 to 6,000 metres, and the weather was clear and fair. When we reached the target, I saw a number of He 111 bombers and Bf 110 *Zerstörer* in a dogfight near London. The Bf 110s were being attacked by Hurricanes and Spitfires, for their own protection, had formed an *Abwehrkreis*, literally a defensive circle. The He 111s, Bf 110s and the British aircraft were all flying at approximately the same height as we were, so I turned towards the British fighters and positioned myself behind one which was attacking our Bf 110s. I opened fire and hit him with my cannon and machine gun fire. He then broke away, leaving me still flying towards the Bf 110s, but everything had happened so fast that one of the Bf 110 rear gunners mistook me for the enemy and opened fire. One of his bullets hit my cockpit and ruptured the fuel line close to my left foot. My engine lost power, petrol poured into the cabin and formed a white vapour trail behind me, a sight I had seen often during the Battle.

I rolled my aircraft inverted and then flew away from the combat area, gliding down towards the South Coast. It was the saddest moment of my career. The engine was still idling and I was a lame duck, easy prey for the British fighters but, surprisingly, I was not attacked. I feathered my propeller and slowly glided in the direction of the coast. It took me about 10 to 15 minutes to reach a flat area near Rye in Kent where I purposely put my "White 7" down in a hard crash landing to make sure the aircraft would be of no use to the British, and in doing so almost broke my back.

Members of the British Home Guard pulled me, nearly unconscious, out of the wreck. Within a week, I was taken under escort to an interrogation camp in London, a journey which involved travelling part of the way on the Tube, the underground railway system in London. As the military escort and I left the station, a ticket collector asked us for our tickets. Thinking that I might be in England for a little while, I cheerfully replied that I had a season ticket! Quite by chance, a London newspaper photographer heard this exchange and took a photograph of the event which was widely published at the time in both London and North American newspapers under the headline: "A Nazi with a Sense of Humour".



In January 1941, some of my prisoner-of-war compatriots and I were sent by ship to Halifax, in Canada. From there, a long train ride ensued with members of the Veterans Guard of Canada acting as guards. As it was wintertime, it was bitterly cold outside but very hot inside the railway carriages and all the windows had been screwed shut to prevent them from being opened. At one point the train made a sudden, unscheduled stop and a commotion broke out between the prisoners and the guards when it was discovered that one of the prisoners had escaped. The missing man was *Obst. Franz von Werra*, the only escapee to succeed in returning to Germany.

For the rest of us, however, the train travelled on until we were eventually deposited in a POW camp at Schreiber, Ontario. I was later transferred to a larger POW camp at Bowmanville and later to Gravenhurst, both also in Ontario. As my early thoughts of escape faded, I devoted myself to study and sports, both of which helped me to face the hardships of repatriation after my return, via England, to Germany.

I spent more than 6 years behind barbed wire in Canada before being released at the end of November 1946 to start a new life in a Germany destroyed and horrendously different from the way I remembered it. This was the end of the war for me and to this day I am thankful to God and my Guardian Angel for their protection.

In 1956, I joined the *Neue Luftwaffe* and served to uphold the principles of NATO.

LEFT: Lt. Bürschigens and his military escort photographed at an underground railway station. See the accompanying personal account for details of Bürschigens' last flight and the cause of the smiles.



LEFT: The only known photograph of Fw. Heinz Urlings' "White 12" of 1/JG 52, which made a forced landing near Canterbury on 2 September.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 1/JG 52 flown by Fw. Heinz Urlings of 1/JG 52.

The Bf 109 E-4 "White 12", flown by Fw. Heinz Urlings of 1/JG 52, took off at 17.00 hrs on 2 September on a freelance patrol. When over England, this aircraft developed engine trouble and Fw. Urlings had already decided to land when he was attacked by a Hurricane. Urlings made a good forced landing at a point two miles north-east of Sturry, near Canterbury at 17.40 hrs. Finished in a high demarcation 02/71 upper splinter scheme, the sides of the fuselage, fin and rudder carried randomly applied mottling in these colours. The tips of the wings and tailplanes were painted white, as was the aft section of the rudder. The spinner was painted half white and half black or black-green 70, and the "Running Bear" emblem of I. Gruppe was carried on both sides of the cowlings.

RIGHT: Seated on the cockpit sill of his Bf 109 E-4, Cooptiques, on 2 September, is Hptm. Wolfgang Ewald of 1/JG 52. In this photograph, Ewald had only moments earlier returned from a sortie over England; in the background another Bf 109 may be seen still taxiing to its parking position. On this day Ewald claimed his first aerial victory since fighting in the Spanish Civil War. Ewald was Gruppenkommandeur of 1/JG 52 from 27 August 1940 to April 1942, when he became Kommandeur of III/JG 3. When shot down by Russian AA guns and taken prisoner on 14 July 1943, Ewald had a total of 78 aerial victories.



Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-1 flown by Uffz. Heinrich Elbers of 8./JG 54.

'Black 2' of 8./JG 54, the Bf 109 E-1 flown by Uffz. Heinrich Elbers during the late afternoon of 2 September. In a surprise attack which wounded Elbers in the foot, the engine of his aircraft was hit and stopped. The aircraft forced landed near Ashford. Finished in a very high demarcation 70/71 upper splinter scheme, the fuselage sides carried a light mottle of what is believed to have been 71. The top segment of the rudder was painted white as were the tips of the wings, tailplanes and forward section of the spinner with the spinner backplate left in black-green 70. The stylised 8. Staffel red and white sparrow emblem appeared on both sides of the cowlings and in keeping with 8. Staffel practice, the aircraft number was carried on the fuselage sides beneath the windscreen. The fuselage Balkenkreuz were smaller than normal with thin, black outlined borders, reminiscent of those seen on pre-war Luftwaffe fighters. The wing Balkenkreuz, too, were in the earlier outboard position and partly covered by the white wingtip paint.



Staffel emblem of 8./JG 54.



BELOW: This Bf 109 E-1, Black 2, WNr. 5470, was flown on 2 September by Uffz. Heinrich Elbers of 8./JG 54. Hit in a surprise attack north of Dungeness, the engine of this aircraft stopped and Elbers forced landed in a field at Kingsnorth near Ashford, the aircraft crashing through a hedge and coming to rest in a ditch at Finns Farm.



THIS PAGE: Two photographs of Elbers' machine while on public display. The aircraft's Black 2 was applied to the forward fuselage, just below the windscreen, and as the wing Balkenkreuz were in the old outboard position, they were partly obscured by the white paint on the wingtips.





## II. (*Schlacht*)/ *Lehrgeschwader 2*

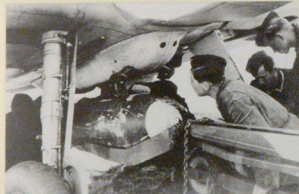
A feature of operations on 2 September was that on this date II (*Schlacht*)/*Lehrgeschwader 2*, at that time the *Luftwaffe*'s only dedicated ground-attack *Gruppe*, flew its first operations of the Battle of Britain. Originally trained for tactical intervention in ground operations and equipped with Henschel Hs 123 biplanes, this *Gruppe* had earlier carried out spectacular and successful low-level attacks during the campaigns in Poland and France. Shortly after the French campaign, the *Gruppe* transferred to its home base at Braunschweig-Wagum for re-equipment and re-training on the Bf 109 E. Training revealed that due to the greater flying speed of the Bf 109, pilots found it more difficult to fly than the Hs 123 and some 20% of the pilots had to be replaced.

The re-fitting of Bf 109s with bomb-racks, bomb fuzing battery box and the necessary electrical release gear to convert the aircraft to fighter-bombers was carried out at Böblingen. Here the pilots also practised dive bombing, low-level attacks and oblique attacks as well as fast strafing runs against ground targets. Because of its specialised mission, II (*Schlacht*)/LG 2 found that it needed fewer armourers than previously but required instead special technical bomb personnel. Additionally, it was discovered that the *Gruppe* required a larger stock of tyres than normal as the strain imposed by the heavy bomb load made it necessary to change tyres after every seventh or eighth take-off.

Under its *Gruppenkommandeur*, Major Otto Weiss, the *Gruppe* transferred to the Channel coast in early September for operations against England. Due to the expected enemy fighter opposition, it was recognised that operations would have to be carried out with strong fighter cover and for this reason the *Gruppe* was stationed at Calais-Marck and ordered to co-operate closely with the resident fighter *Gruppe*, I (*Jagd*)/LG 2, commanded by Oblt. Herbert Ihlefeld. On 2 September, II (*Schlacht*)/LG 2 took part in some of the five daylight attacks launched against targets in the East Kent-Thames Estuary area. Most of these raids were turned back before serious damage could be caused and there were no losses to either II (*Schlacht*)/LG 2 or its fighter escort. Until 15 September, all further cross-Channel fighter-bomber operations by the *Gruppe* were carried out with the whole of *Exp.Gr* 210, but after this date, II (*Schlacht*)/LG 2 flew only with the similarly equipped 3/*Exp.Gr* 210, which was then detached from its parent *Gruppe* for the purpose.



ABOVE: Major Otto Weiss



ABOVE: Loading a Bf 109 E fighter-bomber.



Emblem of 6./LG 2

RIGHT: A Bf 109 E-4 fighter-bomber from Major Otto Weiss's II (*Schlacht*)/LG 2, photographed at Wevelgem, Belgium. Clearly visible is the single 250 kg bomb under the fuselage, the unit badge (INSET) and the characteristic blue and white spinner adopted by this *Gruppe*.



LEFT: A Bf 109 E-4 of II (*Schlacht*)/LG 2 in flight. Unusually, this aircraft carries four 50 kg bombs on its centreline rack. A single 250 kg bomb was a much normal load for this period of the Battle of Britain.



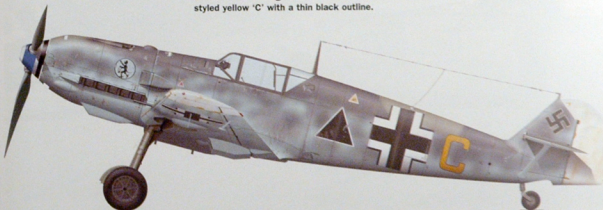
RIGHT: The fuselage markings carried by Fw. Werner Gottschalk's Bf 109 E-4/B.



Emblem of 6./LG 2

Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 6./LG 2 flown by Fw. Werner Gottschalk.

At 17.30 hrs on 6 September, Fw. Werner Gottschalk of 6./LG 2 took off from a small aerodrome approximately 40 miles S.E. of Boulogne. Although his aircraft was fitted with a bomb rack, on this occasion Gottschalk was flying an escort to Bf 109 bombers. The formation flew at 12,000 feet to the Thames Estuary and was near Chatham when this aircraft was hit by AA fire and the fuel tank holled. Gottschalk immediately turned for home, but his fuel ran out and he landed at Hawkinge at 18.14 hrs. This aircraft was finished in an upper surface camouflage that suggests 02 and a locally mixed grey, both the rudder and tips of the main wings were roughly painted white, through which could be seen an earlier application of yellow. The spinner was painted with bands of white and blue and the 6. Staffel 'cat with lantern and sword' emblem is understood to have been carried on both sides of the cowlings. A white bordered black triangle was carried ahead of the fuselage Balkenkreuz while aft of the cross on both sides was a square styled yellow 'C' with a thin black outline.



## August-September 1940



**RIGHT:** Herbert Hildebrand, Gruppenkommandeur of the 1./JG 2 was awarded the Ritterkreuz on 13 September 1940 and is seen here as a Hauptmann in 1941. 1./JG 2 flew as escort to the Jabos of II.(Schlacht)/LG 2

**LEFT:** Refueling the Bf 109 E flown by the Adjutant of 1./JagD/LG 2 at Calais-Marck, 3 September 1940.



**BELOW:** Displaying its yellow wing tip to advantage, the same aircraft is seen leaving its dispersal. The upper surfaces of the wings retain the 02/71 camouflaze while the fuselage finish is a fairly densely applied green mottle over an irregular misting of 02.

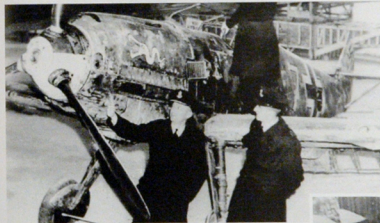


## August-September 1940



**Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-3 flown by Uffz. Heinz Grabow, 3./JG 3.**

The Bf 109 E-3 'Yellow 7' of Uffz. Heinz Grabow of 3./JG 3. On 5 September, the pilot of this aircraft took off from an airfield near Boulogne and, while acting as escort for ten Do 17s, had just made an orbit above the bombers when he was attacked by a British fighter. The engine was hit and Grabow, who had only been with his Geschwader for three weeks, made a forced landing. The aircraft was finished in a high demarcation 70/71 splinter scheme with a heavy mottle of what is believed to have been 02 and 71, on the fuselage sides with the uppersurfaces of the wings and tailplanes also appearing to have a similar finish. The rudder, the tips of the main wings and one half of the spinner were painted white, the latter with a yellow tip. The white Tatzelwurm emblem was applied to both sides of the cowl and was thinly outlined in black with a red tongue. Aft of the Balkenkreuz and only carried on the starboard side was a white saltire on a small black disc, possibly indicating some association with 1./J1/LG 2, or a former connection with the Legion Condor.



The 'Tatzelwurm' emblem of 1./JG 3

**ABOVE AND RIGHT:** Damaged during an escort mission on the morning of 5 September, Uffz. Heinz Grabow of 3./JG 3 was forced to land his Bf 109 E-3 at Wicking in Kent. Having been captured in reasonable condition, his aircraft was sent to Australia where it was displayed to aid recruiting for the Royal Australian Air Force. Although this aircraft had temporary white paint applied to the wing tips and rudder when it was shot down, as these photographs show, this had either worn off by the time the machine was exhibited in Australia or, as with many other aircraft used for display purposes, a replacement rudder from another aircraft has been fitted.

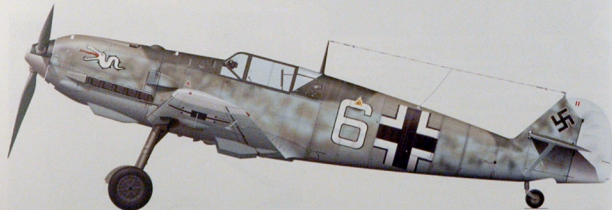






Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 of 1./JG 3 flown by Lt. Heinz Schnabel.

This aircraft, 'White 6', was finished in an O2/71 upper splinter scheme with the fuselage and fin sides lightly mottled in O2. The tips of the main wings and rudder were painted white as was the tip and one half of the spinner. The white Tatzelwurm Staffel emblem was thinly outlined in black and had a red tongue. Two red painted Abschuss bars were carried on the top of the rudder recording victories scored by the previous pilot of this aircraft.



**THIS PAGE AND OPPOSITE:** At 08.40 hrs on 5 September, Lt. Heinz Schnabel took off to escort Do 17 bombers attacking Croydon. On the return flight, Spitfires and a Hurricane split Schnabel's aircraft off from its formation and damaged the engine, resulting in a forced landing in a field at Handen Farm near Abdingdon, Kent, at 10.10 hrs. One of the first tasks to be carried out on forced landed enemy aircraft was to render the guns safe and, in these photographs, soldiers of the Somerset Light Infantry remove the 7.9 mm ammunition from the MG 17 ammunition tanks of Schnabel's 'White 6' before the aircraft is inspected by a shepherd and his flock of sheep. Just visible is part of the white Tatzelwurm emblem of 1./JG 3, while the white painted tip of the port wing has been covered with earth to make it less visible from the air. This aircraft had two victory stripes on the tail, but these, according to Schnabel, were scored by the previous pilot.

After capture, Heinz Schnabel was taken to the Handen farmhouse where the farmer's daughter repaired the torn sleeve of Schnabel's uniform as he explained to her mother the meaning of the white Tatzelwurm on his aircraft. At that time, Schnabel was not very fit as he was still recovering from a severe chest wound sustained during the French campaign, and first spent some time in hospital before being sent to the PoW camp at Grisevalde. Interestingly, Heinz Schnabel almost escaped from captivity in 1941 when he and Obit Harry Wappler, a former He 111 pilot from KG 27, successfully stole a Miles Magister trainer from RAF Kingsnorth. Eventually becoming lost and running out of fuel, they forced landed the Magister near Great Yarmouth and were subsequently recaptured and ultimately sent to Canada for the duration of the war.



RIGHT: The BF 109 E flown by Hptm. Wilhelm Meyerweissflog, Stab/JG 53, who forced landed at Monkton Farm, near Manston, on 5 September.



**Messerschmitt BF 109 E W.Nr.5375 flown by Hptm. Wilhelm Meyerweissflog, Stab/JG 53.**

BF 109 E of Stab/JG 53. The pilot of this aircraft, W.Nr 5375, was Hptm. Wilhelm Meyerweissflog, a 50-year old pilot who, on account of his age, caused some interest to RAF Intelligence personnel when he was interrogated in Britain. Hptm. Meyerweissflog was born on 27 October 1889 and - as the RAF took care to note - had learned to drive a car as early as 1911. During WW I, he had been an Observer in the Imperial German Air Force, and when called up for WW II, he became an Administrative Officer attached to the Stab of JG 3. After a period of leave, he returned on the evening of 4 September and joined Stab/JG 53, again as Administrative Officer. Next day, shortly after lunch, he "saw the boys going off and thought he would like a flip, too. He jumped into his aircraft, flew vaguely in the direction of England and was neatly shot through the (petrol) tank by a British fighter", believed to have been F/Lt. P.C. Hughes of 234 Sqn. Hptm. Meyerweissflog made a forced landing at Monkton Farm near St. Nicholas-at-Wade at 15.45 hrs, "from which more by luck than good judgement he came out safely and, when apprehended, had not the slightest idea where he was". To further quote the interrogation report, his start and mission were described as a "Very freelance patrol", and his morale as "Good under trying circumstances". Hptm. Meyerweissflog's aircraft was understood to have carried a heavily mottled uppersurface camouflage consisting of 02 and a unit mixed medium grey and carried a 1 foot wide red band around the cowlings. The rudder and tips of the main wings were painted white and the spinner was reportedly painted half white and half red with a black-green backplate.

RIGHT: Another BF 109E shot down on 5 September was this E-4 flown by the Gruppenadjutant of II/JG 3, Oblt. Franz von Werra, one of the Luftwaffe's well-known personalities of the Second World War and fated to become known as 'The One That Got Away'. Von Werra's BF 109 E, already damaged during a morning freie Jagd over Kent, was again attacked by P/O B.G. Stapleton of 603 Sqn forcing him to land his crippled fighter at Love's Farm, Marden, Kent. Taken into captivity and eventually transported to Canada for internment in a POW camp, von Werra was able to escape to the USA and eventually returned to active duty before being killed on 25 October 1941. Volume 2, Section 3 of this series explores his career in detail.



RIGHT: 6 September 1940 and the BF 109 E-4 'White 5' of 7./JG 53's Uffz. Hans-Georg Schulte lies abandoned on Vincents Farm to the north of RAF Manston flying with four other BF 109s on a late afternoon freie Jagd over Dover. Schulte was attacked by fighters and his aircraft damaged. Although Schulte attempted to land on Manston airfield he overshot and his machine came to rest in a field. Note the old style Balkenkreuz.



LEFT: Another view of Uffz. Schulte's aircraft, apparently just prior to being scrapped.

**Messerschmitt BF 109 E-4 of 7./JG53 flown by Uffz. H.G. Schulte**

Hans-Georg Schulte's 'White 5' of 7./JG 53 took off at 17.30 hrs on 16 September to carry out a freelance patrol. It was flying with four other BF 109s from the 7. Staffel at a height of 16,500 feet when it was attacked by fighters and Uffz. Schulte forced-landed near R.A.F. Manston at 18.50 hrs. Finished in an uppersurface scheme of 02/71, the colours were extended down the fuselage sides in random patches suggesting a scheme similar to that of the earlier low demarcation 70/71 finish. The spinner, upper and lower cowlings and rudder were painted white with the previously applied red cowlings band showing through the white in places on the cowlings. Both the '5' and vertical III. Gruppe bar were applied in white with no sign of any outlining, and the Hakenkreuz on both sides of the fin had been overpainted. The white borders to the arms of the fuselage Balkenkreuz were also very narrow, having been reduced to lessen their visibility.

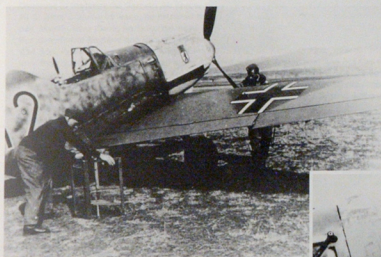






Messerschmitt Bf 109 E-4 W.Nr. 2762 of 5./JG 27 flown by Fw. Erich Braun.

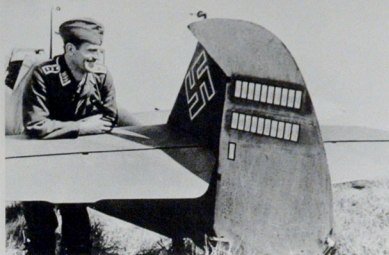
Bf 109 E-4, 'Black 6', W.Nr. 2762 of 5./JG 27. At 08.30 hrs on 6 September, Fw. Erich Braun took off from a field aerodrome near St. Omer and, together with other aircraft from 5./JG 27, met up with a small number of bomber aircraft at 15,000 feet over Cap Gris-Nez and proceeded to escort them to London. On the return journey, the formation was attacked from behind by Spitfires and Fw. Braun's aircraft was hit in one wing and the engine. The coolant ran out of the engine and Braun turned for home. However, he was followed by another Spitfire and was eventually forced to bale out over Tonbridge in Kent, leaving his aircraft to crash at Bank Farm, Tudeley. As the aircraft was almost completely destroyed, the accompanying profile shows only how the aircraft is believed to have been finished, and is based on photographs of other aircraft of 11./JG 27 and notes contained in the A.I.I.(k) Report. In all probability, the aircraft was finished in an 02/71 upper scheme with a lightly applied mottle on the fin and fuselage, and photographs of other Staffel aircraft of the period show them to have a yellow cowling and rudder. As confirmed in the A.I.I.(k) Report, the machine conformed to Staffel custom in having a black number outlined in white and a red Gruppe bar aft of the Balkenkreuz.



ABOVE AND RIGHT: Two aircraft of 11./JG 27 showing similar markings to Fw. Braun's 'Black 6'. The 'Berlin Bear' badge of Hptm. Werner Andre's 11./JG 27 first appeared on several aircraft during July and August 1940 when the Gruppe was stationed at Grépon in Normandy and was subsequently adopted by the complete Gruppe. Note in the photo to the right, the variations in the badge detail.



The 'Berlin Bear' badge of 11./JG 27



LEFT: Oftw. Werner Machold of 1./JG 2 is seen here on 4 September posing by the tail of his Bf 109 E. On the rudder is displayed his 21st victory, scored that day over an RAF Spitfire. On the 5th, he was awarded the Ritterkreuz and on the 7th he would leave 1. Staffel to join 9./JG 2.

RIGHT: This photograph of Oblt. Walter Schneider, Staffelführer of 6./JG 26 sitting in his Bf 109 E 'Brown 1', was taken at Marquise, probably on 6 September after he claimed the destruction of two 72 Sqn Spitfires. Schneider led the 6./JG 26 up until his death on 22 December 1941 when, becoming disorientated in fog, he and four of his pilots flew into a hill. On 2 January 1942, he was posthumously awarded the German Cross in Gold. Just visible beneath the ledge of the cockpit is the Staffel's Steinbock emblem. Note also that this aircraft is fitted with an armoured windscreen.

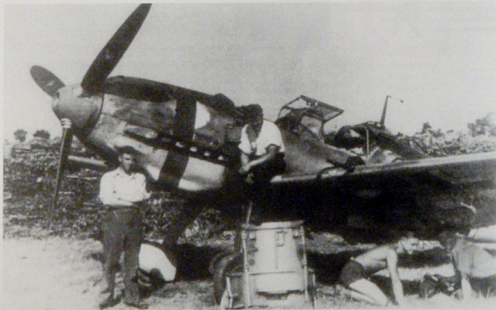


LEFT: Lt. Julius Meinberg of 4./JG 2, sitting on the rear fuselage of his Bf 109 E at Maréchal near Calais in early September. On 6 September, Meinberg claimed his 5th and 6th victories, both Spitfires. Note that a section of the yellow painted rudder has been roughly left in the original blue to accommodate the pilot's Abschuss tally. At the end of August both 1. and 11. Gruppen of JG 2 had transferred to Maréchal.



**ABOVE:** BF 109s of 9./JG 52 at Coquelles, near Calais, early September. While Yellow 6 carried a conventional style fuselage mottle, the other two aircraft have been toned down with the cross-hatch overspray more usually associated with JG 54. As both units were based at Coquelles airfield, it is possible that the common camouflage scheme results from shared workshop facilities.

**RIGHT:** Ground crew pictured with a BF 109 E-3 of 6./JG 53 at Eagles or Le Touquet, during the latter part of August 1940. The red ring has been applied around the nose, but still visible is the lighter patch of the over-painted PW As emblem.



**BELOW:** A line-up of 7./JG 53 aircraft, believed to have been photographed on the III Gruppe Feldflugplatz at Pommers-Breest between late July and mid-August 1940. The camouflage is the 02/70/71 scheme mentioned earlier and the Hakenkreuz on the fin of White 12 has been painted out and then, unusually, re-applied to the rudder. The pilots are, from left to right, Fw Hermann Neuhoff, Uffz, Hans-Götg Schulze, Lt. Franz Götz, Oblt. Heinz Albrecht and unknown. White 5 in the line-up is the E-4 which Uffz. Schulze crash-landed near Manton aerodrome on the evening of 6 September.



**LEFT:** Two aircraft of 9./JG 53 with 'yellow 11' nearest the camera. Note that both aircraft have red cowling rings and that the Hakenkreuz has been retained in the correct position on the fin of both machines.



**LEFT:** Photographed at La Villaz airfield on the island of Guernsey (Channel Islands), the horizontal bar and red ring identify this as an aircraft of II./JG 53. Note that although belonging to the same Geschwader as the other aircraft shown above, the camouflage more closely resembles the usual style of the period. Although frequently photographed on Guernsey, JG 53 was located on permanent bases in France and used the island only as a forward airfield.



## The Opposition



ABOVE AND LEFT: On 6 September 1940, a Spitfire Mk I coded 'XTD', serial number X4260, was damaged while in combat with aircraft from JG 54 and the pilot, P/O J.R. Caster from 603 Sqn, forced landed near Calais where he was taken prisoner.



### S/LDR. ZDZISLAW KRASNODEBSKI (POLISH), 303 (KOCUSZKO) SQN, RAE

Zdzisław Krasnodebski was born in Wola Osowska, near Łuków in Poland, on 10 August 1904. He joined the Polish Air Force in 1928 and shared in the destruction of an enemy aircraft in September 1939 when he was in command of 311 Dyon. He was commissioned in the R.A.F. in May 1940 and became joint CO (with S/Ldr R.G. Kellert) of 303 Sqn at Northolt on its formation on 2 August, 1940. On the 6 September, he was shot down during a dogfight with Bf 109s but although badly burned, managed to bale out safely. He was admitted to Farnborough Hospital and later went to the burns unit at Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead, where he underwent plastic surgery carried out by the extremely capable surgeon, Archibald McIndoe, and became a 'Guinea Pig'.

He was awarded the Virtuti Militari (5th Class) – the Polish equivalent of the British VC or American Medal of Honour – on 23 December 1940 and, returning to duty on 2 June 1941, was posted to Canada. Before returning to England, he spent the period from April to October 1943 in command of RAF Heston before going on to take command of 131 Airfield, Northolt, a post which he retained until 17 February 1944.

In January 1945, Krasnodebski spent a period of time at Staff College after which he was given command of R.A.F. Newton, an appointment he held until his release from the Polish Air Force in December 1946 with the rank of Group Captain. He was awarded the Krzyż Walczących (Cross of Valour) on 31 October 1947. Leaving England, he moved to Canada and died in Toronto in 1980.



### P/O W.M.L. FISKE (AMERICAN), 601 (COUNTY OF LONDON) SQN, R.AUX.A.E.

The son of an international banker, William Meade Lindsay Fiske, attended Cambridge University during the early 1930s. He set a record for the Cresta Run and captained the US Olympic team which won the bobsled event in 1932. Fiske drove in the first Le Mans 24-hour race when he was 19, and at one time held the Cambridge University to London record in his 8 litre Bentley. In 1936 he married the ex-Countess of Warwick.

Two weeks after the outbreak of war, Fiske volunteered for the RAF and in late October 1939 he began his flying training at No. 10 EFTS, Calne. He was posted to No. 2 FTS, Brze Norton on 20 March 1940, passed out above average in early July and joined 601 Sqn at Tangmere on the 12th. Prior to making his first flight with the squadron on 14 July, Fiske had never flown a Hurricane before.

Having flown less than eleven hours on Hurricanes, he flew his first patrol with the squadron on 20 July. On 13 August he claimed the destruction of a Ju 88 but was badly shot up over Tangmere on the 16th. His aircraft caught fire and although he was warned by ground control not to land, Fiske thought his aircraft was only leaking glycol and refused to bale out. The moment he touched down, his Hurricane was enveloped in flames and Fiske was grievously burned. He was taken to hospital but died of shock and injuries the next day, 17 August. He was 29 years old and is buried in St. Mary and Blaise Churchyard, Bosgrove, Surrey.

On 4 July, 1941, a bronze memorial plaque was unveiled in his memory at St Paul's Cathedral. Beneath his name is the inscription: "An American citizen who died that England might live".



### F/O WILLIAM LIDSTONE MCKNIGHT (CANADIAN), 242 SQN, RAE

William 'Willy' Lidstone McKnight was born in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada on 18 November 1918 and moved with his family to Calgary in 1919. He was educated at Crescent Heights High School in Calgary and after graduating, enrolled in medical school at the University of Alberta in 1938. Deciding on a flying instead of a medical career, he left his native Canada for England in January 1939 to join the Royal Air Force on a short service commission. After completing his flying training, he joined the newly reformed 242 (Fighter) Squadron at Church Fenton on 6 November 1939, a squadron composed almost entirely of Canadian personnel.

With his flight commander and fellow Canadians Slim Grassick and Stan Turner, McKnight went to France on 14 May 1940 on attachment to 607 Sqn. A few days later they were attached to 615 Sqn at Moorslede, Belgium and on the 19th, McKnight claimed his first victory: a Bf 109 destroyed over Cambrai, becoming the second Canadian to down a Luftwaffe aircraft in World War 2. Two days later, he returned to England. Flying over Dunkirk on 28 May, he claimed a Bf 109 destroyed but was himself attacked by another Bf 109 which damaged his Hurricane's oil system. On 29 May, McKnight claimed one Bf 109 and a Do 17 destroyed with a further Bf 109 claimed as a probable and that evening, was awarded an immediate DFC, making him the first Canadian fighter pilot to be decorated in World War 2. On 31 May he destroyed two Bf 110s and on 1 June, claimed two Ju 87s destroyed and two probables.

On 30 August he claimed three Bf 110s and one He 111 destroyed and on 9 September two Bf 110s. He destroyed a Do 17 on 18 September and shared in the destruction of a Ju 88. He was awarded a Bar to his DFC on 8 October and on 5 November he claimed his final victory, a shared Bf 109 over Gravesend.

On 2 January 1941, McKnight, in company with P/O M.K. Brown, was on an offensive cross-Channel operation. After crossing the French coast near Gravelines, they were strafing enemy troops when they were bounced by Bf 109s. Although Brown managed to get in a quick burst of fire at a Bf 109 going after his leader, both aircraft disappeared into cloud and McKnight was never seen again. He is believed to have fallen to either the flak or the Bf 109s.

At the time of his death, Willy McKnight was the highest scoring Canadian pilot. His name is entered on the Air Forces memorial at Runnymede and he is remembered on a commemorative plaque displayed at Calgary International Airport, a section of the main road which passes Calgary airport also bears his name.

LEFT: The skeleton with sickle personal emblem which appeared on both sides of the fuselage on P/O McKnight's Hurricane 1E4 was a reference to his pre-war days as a medical student. Note that in each view, the skeleton is correctly portrayed with the sickle in its left hand.



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During the Battle, Hurricanes outnumbered Spitfires and were considered reliable machines. F/O F. R. Gasey flew Hurricanes with 43 Sqn and recalled: "The greatest tribute I can pay to it is that it would come back with all sorts of bits missing - it was built like the Forth Bridge. It would take a tremendous amount of punishment. On one occasion I had a hole in one wing which a man could have fallen through but, nevertheless, that machine came back very well and landed more or less as if nothing very much was wrong".

**RIGHT:** In what may well be a staged photograph, the pilot of an RAF Hurricane Mk I (P2541) watches as armourers finish reloading the bank of four .303 Browning machine-guns in the port wing of his aircraft.



**ABOVE:** With its armament closely grouped in each wing, the impact of a burst from all eight guns was likened to a five-ton lorry hitting a brick wall at sixty miles per hour!

**RIGHT:** The coat of arms painted on the escape hatch of the 87 Sqn Hurricane flown by New Zealander P/O DH Ward during the August battles. In a display of inverse logic, the coat of arms featured four bad luck symbols: a broken mirror, a third light, walking under a ladder, and the number thirteen. The reference to the third light originated in the British trenches during the First World War, when soldiers lit three cigarettes in the dark using the same match. Experience showed that a German sniper was often alerted to the flare of the match as the first cigarette was lit, raised and aimed his rifle as the second soldier lit his, and fired at the match flame once the third man had bent forward to light his cigarette.



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